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ISLAM

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N. BAYRAMSAKHATOV

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Translation

ISLAM AND THE NEW LIFE STYLE

By

N. Bayramsakhatov



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ISLAM AND THE NEW LIFE STYLE

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ANNOTATION

[Text] The author of the pamphlet, chief of the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkmenistan, tells how in the course of the socialist transformation of the living conditions of the Turkmen people new, Soviet holidays, ceremonies and traditions are being introduced into their life, and how the influence of the ideology of Islam on the everyday life of the republic's rural population is being overcome.

The pamphlet will be of interest to party, Komsomol and trade union workers and propaganda specialists conducting atheistic work among the population.

INTRODUCTION

In the 7th decade of its existence, our country has become one of the most highly developed powers of the world. And all peoples of the fraternal union of Soviet republics take pride in the path that has been traversed. In the Report by the CPSU Central Committee to the 25th Party Congress, L. I. Brezhnev said: "Our country and our people have traveled a path that has not been easy, but it has been glorious. ...Our road is the road of truth, the road of freedom, it is the road of happiness for the people."¹ These words expressed the meaning of the historic path which all peoples of our country have traveled.

Remarkable changes have taken place during this time also in Soviet Turkmenistan, at one time a remote colonial district of Tsarist Russia.

As far back as the beginning of the century, the definition of Turkmen as natives was customary in the language of the Tsarist administration. "The Russian-native schools," "The Trans-Caspian native newspaper"--these are the official concepts of that time. The Turkmen people, rich in historical traditions, were condemned to a colonial existence. Only the October Revolution opened up for them room for social and spiritual development. In the fraternal family of the Soviet peoples, they progressed from a semi-nomadic feudal life to a developed socialist society.

The absolute majority of Turkmen entered the 20th century as their forefathers had the preceding centuries. On scraps of land--and in 1914 more

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than 60 percent of the da'ikhans had no more than two desyatinas of land--they toiled from morning till night, obtaining wretched harvests. A full 28.2 percent of the da'ikhan did not have draught animals; 50 percent did not have agricultural implements. The azal (a wooden plough), the pil (a spade), the ketmen' (a kind of hoe), the orak (sickle)--these were the simple tools with which the Turkmen peasant fought for his right to live.

Russia's annexation of the Trans-Caspian land at the end of the 19th century resulted in certain advances in the agricultural and spiritual life of the Turkmens. However, these advances were extremely localized. Industry was practically non-existent; petroleum extraction was measured in dozens of poods; there was no electric power at all. The working class numbered a few hundred people and was mainly involved in the primary processing of agricultural products.

According to a report by Academician V. V. Bartol'd, at the time of the population census in 1897 an insignificant number of indigenous non-Russians, i.e., Turkmens, 1,432 people, lived in cities.²

In 1911 the kray had 46 secular schools, in which only 151 students out of 4,355 were representatives of the Turkmen nationality.

Turkmenia was often called "the boondock of the boondocks" of Tsarist Russia, where oppression of the local feudal-usurious order combined with the policy of colonial plunder and national oppression was carried out by Tsarism. The following comparisons may help to obtain a clear picture of Turkmenia as "the boondock of the boondocks": while literacy among the Tatars, Kazakhs, and the peoples of the Northern Caucasus reached 1-3 percent, in Turkmenia only 7 out of 1,000 people were literate. Before the October Revolution not a single book was published in the kray, nor a single newspaper in the Turkmen language; not a single national public library or other cultural-educational institution was in existence.

The Tsarist government allotted meager funds for educational needs. On the eve of World War I 12,000 rubles a year was allotted for the support of schools in Ashkhabad, but 47,000 for the police. The entire budget of the Tedzhenskiy Pristay District amounted to 5,140 rubles, of which more than 4,000 rubles was expended for the police.³

Under these conditions, the influence of religion on the consciousness of the people was very strong. The territory of the former Trans-Caspian Oblast numbered more than 400 mosques and hundreds of so-called "holy places." Tens of thousands of mullahs, sheikhs and ishans (community leaders), khodzhas and sayyids, pirs and sopi "sat on the shoulders" of the people. The ruling Moslem religion regulated all aspects of life and everyday existence, beginning with personal family relations and ending with civil and criminal legislation. In the rural locality the mullah was simultaneously the minister of religion as well as judge, doctor, teacher

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and money-lender and, frequently, the only literate individual, who could write a letter or petition. And such a situation completely suited Tsarism, which relied on the support of the Moslem clergy in the execution of its colonial policy.

The profound social changes that have taken place in the republic during the 60 years became the basis of radical changes in the spiritual life of the Turkmen people. A powerful industry has been created, which now accounts for 51 percent of the gross product of the republic's economy. The development of large petroleum and gas deposits led to the development of such industries as the raw-material, chemical and machine-building industries. For example, the relative share of the gas industry in the structure of industrial production of the republic amounted to 12.1 percent in the 10th Five-Year Plan; and the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic now accounts for 20 percent of the total volume of gas extracted in the Soviet Union. Turkmenia, which had not known electric lights, now has become a republic with complete electrification. The current developed by its electric power stations is fed into the unified power system of Central Asia.

Products of the republic's industrial enterprises are known not only in our country, but also far beyond its borders.

Such a leap in the development of Turkmenistan was possible only because of the aid received from fraternal republics, which made "sacrifices for the sake of overcoming the backwardness of national borderlands." Especially great, L. I. Brezhnev noted, was the assistance of the Russian working class: "In essence, this was a glorious exploit by the entire class, the entire people, achieved in the name of internationalism."⁴

Let us cite just one eloquent fact: In 1924-1925, immediately after the formation of the republic, the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic's own income accounted for slightly more than 10 percent of its budget. Soviet Turkmenistan represents a historic example of the possibility of swift socioeconomic development based on socialist cooperation and integration.

The conversion of the republic's agricultural production to collective principles was of historic significance and had enormous consequences. During the years of Soviet power agriculture in Turkmenistan was transformed. Primitive manual work has disappeared, as have the poverty and oppression of the rural toiler and the constant dependence on climatic conditions. In 1913, 69,000 tons of cotton were produced. Now, more than 1,100,000 tons of it are grown on the fields of the republic. And, indeed, not long ago, 15 years, the cotton harvest amounted to 360,000 tons. Turkmenistan has become the second cotton base of the country and the largest supplier of the best varieties of fine-fiber cotton.⁵ Tens of thousands of machines are at work in the fields, collecting more than 60 percent of the cotton. Vegetables and melons grown on irrigated land are transported in a never-ending stream into the all-union fund.

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Successes in the sphere of land improvement have made possible a significant increase in grain production, which during the 9th Five-Year Plan alone increased by a factor of 3, including an 18-fold increase in corn production. In the southern part of the contemporary map of Turkmenia a blue thread reaches from the west to the east. This is the Karakum Canal imeni V. I. Lenin, the largest artificial water artery in the world. Almost 25 years was needed for its creation. For a distance of 1,000 kilometers, the man-made river carries its waters, irrigating more than 400,000 hectares of land. Forty-five percent of the cotton produced by the republic are fed by the waters of the canal. For more than 400 kilometers of its path the canal is navigable. The tempo of construction with which it was built was unknown in world practice.

More than 2.5 million people, the representatives of more than 100 nations and nationalities, live in the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic, and in the fraternal family. With the assistance of all peoples of our immense fatherland they produced more than 100 million tons of petroleum and tens of billions of cubic meters of gas. The industrial products of Turkmenia go to 55 countries in the world.

All of this is the direct result of socialist development, of the "new" that was brought into the world by the October Revolution. An important achievement of this development are the fundamental changes in the spiritual and material life of the workers of Turkmenia. Speaking at the 25th CPSU Congress, L. I. Brezhnev called an important result of the past 60-year period the birth of the new man, Soviet man, "who, passing all tests, changed himself beyond recognition, combined in himself ideological conviction and enormous life energy, culture, knowledge and the ability to apply them."⁶

The victory of socialism injured the social roots of religion in Turkmenistan. The new life, the new social relations, the new social existence have displaced the former religiosity in the consciousness and everyday life of millions of people, have drawn in all workers--believers and non-believers--into active social activity, have opened up to them a wide path for the development of science and culture. The socialist society guarantees the firm material and moral situation of the individual in society, frees him from unemployment, hunger, poverty and deprivations, from fear of tomorrow. In such conditions, the majority of the members of our society have moved away from religion, though it must be acknowledged that even today Islam still has a considerable number of followers among some oriental peoples in our country, including the Turkmen.

In the course of building socialism in Turkmenistan there has been a sharp reduction in the number of mosques, prayer houses and so-called "holy places." This is the result of the weakening of the religiosity of the population, of the departure from religion by a large number of people.

Important changes have taken place in the sphere of religious consciousness itself. An analysis of the state of religiosity of the population on the basis of empirical research conducted on several kolkhozes of the

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Kunya-Urgenchskiy, Bayram-Aliyskiy, Iolotanskiy, Tedzhenskiy, Geok-Tepinskiy, and Takhtinskiy Rayons, and on the Soviet Turkmenistany Kolkhoz of Ashkhabad Rayon show that the process of destroying religion as an integral system of ideas, survivals and actions is moving forward. The religiosity of people frequently takes the form of the observance of only isolated elements of Islam.

A sphere of the life of people which is more steadfast and does not yield as easily to changes is the everyday life, especially the everyday life of the rural population. A considerable migration into the city has resulted in the fact that elements of the rural everyday life have become consolidated in the life of townspeople who are preserving a link with the village. "The everyday life is most difficult of all to subject to change," wrote M. I. Kalinin. "Political and economic relations have already changed to a certain extent, but everyday life remains for a very long time with its remnants...changing everyday life is a very difficult task, and those who think that one can act in an offhand way and change everything are greatly mistaken."⁷

Thus, the everyday mode of life is one of the most conservative elements of social life. A great role in everyday life is played by the historical traditions of the old generations who promote the preservation of survivals of the social formations of the past. Moreover, it is a known fact that the relations of separate people to society are controlled more easily than their relations to one another. Everyday relations affect personal interests and the feelings of people, and interference in these relations is not always possible. For this reason they yield to control on the part of society only with difficulty.

At the same time, it is precisely in everyday practice, in the routine forms of the regulation of everyday relations that religious survivals are rooted most often. This is why the struggle for the transformation of everyday life on the basis of socialist principles is simultaneously a struggle against the survivals of the past and, above all, against religious survivals.

Islam connected the basic moments of the life of the individual--birth, marriage, death, and so on--by a chain of religious rituals and ceremonies. And now the observance of these rituals and ceremonies remains a "life-giving" source of the religiosity of people. To a certain extent, the reproduction of religion occurs with their aid. The religious ideologues cultivate the belief that the link of religious ceremonies with the basic moments of the life of the individual reflects age-old family traditions. In reality they are first and foremost the manifestation of feudalism, which ruled in our kray less than a century ago.

The introduction of new forms of everyday life, which began during the first years of Soviet power, has become an especially active and effective factor of communist education in recent times, when generations of people

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have developed, who have gone through the Soviet school, enriched themselves with knowledge and experienced the international influence of other fraternal nations of our country.

The author set himself the task of investigating the influence of the ideology of Islam on the everyday life of the rural population; of observing how in the course of the socialist transformation of everyday life and the introduction of new, Soviet ceremonies the influence of Islam has been consistently undermined; of analyzing the forms and methods of the work of party and other public organizations of Turkmenistan, which are promoting the conquest of the survivals of the Islamic religion in the consciousness of the workers and the formation of a communist life style.

FOOTNOTES

1. "Materialy XXV s"ezda KPSS" [Materials of the 25th CPSU Congress], Moscow, 1976, p 88.
2. V. V. Bartol'd, "Iz istorii kul'turnoy zhizni Turkestana" [From the History of the Cultural Life of Turkestan], Leningrad, 1927, p 169.
3. Cf. B. Ovezov, "Po leninskomu puti" [Along the Leninist Path], Ashkhabad, 1964, p 172.
4. L. I. Brezhnev, "O 50-letii Soyuza Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik" [On the 50th Anniversary of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics], Moscow, 1972, p 13.
5. "Materialy XXI s"ezda Kommunisticheskoy partii Turkmenistana" [Materials of the 21st Congress of the Communist Party of Turkmenistan], Ashkhabad, 1976, p 13.
6. "Materialy XXV s"ezda KPSS" [Materials of the 25th CPSU Congress], p 87.
7. M. I. Kalinin, "O kommunisticheskom vospitanii" [On Communist Indoctrination], Moscow, 1956, pp 64-65.
8. V. I. Lenin, "Polnoye sobraniye sochinenii" [Complete Collected Works], Vol 41, pp 304-305.

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THE RADICAL TRANSFORMATION OF TURKMEN RURAL LIFE

The people in every social and economic system have their own special way of life, which reflects the peculiarities of the existing production mode, the social structure, peculiarities of the material and spiritual culture, traditions and customs. A well-arranged life with high standards is of enormous importance with respect to increasing labor productivity and creates conditions conducive to communist indoctrination. All of this means that transformation of the old way and the creation of new ways of life are important tasks facing our society.

We know that as any new society establishes itself in history, it does not create its culture, its way of life or its ceremonies anew, in a void. It does not destroy all of the old, but inherits and utilizes many of the positive things out of man's past experience. This can also be said of Soviet holidays, ceremonies and rituals. A new and contemporary ritual cannot exist without a foundation of tradition. Soviet ceremonies were developed from the foundation of our critically revamped heritage from the past.

"The proletarian culture," V. I. Lenin wrote, "must form a natural development of that store of knowledge which mankind produced under the oppression of the capitalist society, the landowner society, the bureaucratic society."¹ He had in mind the progressive elements of human culture.

All religions, of course, including Islam, give a great deal of attention to matters of daily life, to the regulation of relationships between people and to the definition of standards of behavior within the family and in the society. The transformation of daily life and day-to-day family relationships on the basis of the new, socialist principles should therefore be regarded as an important means of overcoming the influence of religion.

A. V. Lunacharskiy described the matter for us. "Communism," he wrote, "is the fearsome enemy of religion, an enemy which will ultimately bury it, if communism succeeds in creating a bright and happy way of life."²

The new way of life developed in our nation under extremely difficult conditions created by economic backwardness and the devastation left by the war. There still existed striking contrasts between the old and the new throughout the structure of social life and in the everyday existence of the workers. In addition, they were overcome in a situation of extremely acute class struggle. Along with reforming the economy, developing production forces and organizing the operation of the new establishments, we also had to raise the educational level of the workers, overcome the reactionary customs and traditions of the old social systems and create a new culture.

A. V. Lunacharskiy described the task of Soviet authorities in the area of everyday life as the following: "Regulating family affairs, improving the

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status of women, indoctrinating the children and youth, fighting for fit housing and combating diseases, all of which involves doing away with the primitive homemaking system and replacing it with well-planned, public nurseries, kitchens, dining halls, laundries, and so forth; satisfying the growing needs of the masses by establishing good clubs and setting up a system of convenient libraries; bringing these cultural conditions of city life to the rural areas; building new housing and manufacturing the furnishings, everything from utensils and clothing to furniture, which will create a healthy and cheerful atmosphere both in the private apartments of the workers and in the clubs, public assembly halls and so forth; selecting the very best works of art and those dearest to us out of the treasures from the past; ...creating not only scientifically organized working conditions but also artistically arranged leisuretime facilities."³

There were special difficulties involved in reforming the life of the rural population, because in the rural area there were predominantly small peasant holdings with extremely backward methods of land utilization, with traditional methods and numerous remnants of the patriarchal society.

The old way of life could be radically altered in the rural area only through the socialist restructuring of agriculture and the amalgamation of millions of family farms into a large socialist organization. V. I. Lenin made the following statement in his speech at the first All-Russian Congress of Peasant Deputies: "...farming in the old way cannot be. If we stay on the small farms as of old, even though it be as free citizens on free land, we are still faced with certain ruin..."⁴

Especially archaic forms of land utilization existed in Russia's outlying national districts. In Turkmenia the Tsarist administrators, hand in hand with the landowners and the clergy, maintained agrarian relationships preserved from the tribal system. Even the water and land distribution system based on the old tribal order was not changed during the years of Tsarist rule in Turkmenia. Some thirsted for water, while others speculated, selling water at a high price. The tribal leaders, the clergy and the kulak-landowners had the best land and water.

The primitive technical "equipment" of agriculture is borne out by just the fact that on the eve of the Great October Socialist Revolution there were 64 ploughs and 36 cotton planters in all in the territory of the former Trans-Caspian Province.

This is why it was necessary to destroy the patriarchal forms of agrarian relationships before moving on to the collectivization of agriculture. The party resolved this complicated social issue with the land and water reform carried out in 1925-1927 in the republics of Central Asia.

This reform was of enormous importance for the restructuring of Turkmenistan's agriculture and the life style of its peasants. In the

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First place, it put an end to all the old forms of tribal landownership, deprived all nonworking elements, including the clergy, of the right to utilize land and water, and turned the land and water over to the working da'ikhans. Eliminating the sanashik,⁵ it established new and fair conditions of land and water use. Secondly, the land and water reform did away with the old legal relationships remaining from the tribal system.

Nationalization of the land, the new land relationships and the establishment of the first sovkhozes, agricultural artels and cooperatives had an enormous psychological effect on the peasants. Social advances led to a breakdown of the old relationships in daily life. The total breakdown of the old life style in the rural area occurred later, however, when the socialist reorganization of agriculture on an industrial basis got under way.

The land and water reform could not immediately eliminate all the remnants of the patriarchal-feudal system in agriculture, but it did eliminate the backward agrarian system in its main forms and created the essential preconditions for the transition to collective farming, which was basically completed in the Turkmen SSR by 1937.

The socioeconomic, political and cultural changes taking place in the life of the peasantry as a result of socialist reorganization in the rural area had a crucial role in the overcoming of relics of religion and life style and of superstitions. Agriculture's dependence upon "mystical" forces of nature and the appalling exploitation to which most poor peasants and hired farm laborers were subjected, all of this, taken together, provided good soil for the flourishing of extremely barbarous, brutal and absurd religious concepts among the da'ikhans.

It would be a mistake, of course, to believe that a religious individual only has to become a member of a kolkhoz and begin using advanced agricultural equipment, and he will immediately be freed of the vestiges of religion and former life style. The new awareness and the scientific-materialistic view of the world, after all, are developed in the process of reform of the entire social life, including the cultural revolution. The collective system of farming, however, and shared goals and interests in the actual performance of productive work create the preconditions necessary for this.

The socioeconomic changes which took place in the rural area were of enormous importance for the Turkmen da'ikhans, whose entire way of life was interwoven with the Islamic religion and with pre-Islamic cults. Having lived under exactly the same conditions for centuries, the Turkmen had developed specific habits and manners, customs and ceremonies. Islamic law, on the one hand, and the secluded existence, on the other, preserved their way of life.

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In the life of the Turkmen peasant the family was the primary unit of agricultural production and of subsistence and semi-subsistence farming, a kind of closed community with strictly prescribed morals and manners. This intertwining of production and daily existence isolated the life of every member of the family within the unit, with all his interests and all his free time concentrated therein.

Squalid mud huts, homespun clothing, primitive household items and an unvaried diet were characteristic features of the Turkmen da'ikhan's existence. Added to this were the ignorance of the majority of the people, various kinds of superstitions and faith in witch doctors.

Nomadic livestock breeders made up a considerable portion of Turkmenistan's population. The working population in the livestock-raising areas were extremely backward and were all the captives of patriarchal-feudal ways. Feudal lords and landowners still ruled in those areas at the end of the 1920's and the beginning of the 1930's, continuing to control the pastures and wells. Politically unaware, a certain portion of the livestock breeders supported armed opposition to the building of socialism by the landowners and basmaks.

Turkmenia's communist party and government devoted a great deal of attention to the problem of converting the nomads to a settled existence.

First of all, the wells were nationalized, the livestock was confiscated from the feudal lords and landowners, and the elimination of remnants of feudal ownership of the means of production was completed. Livestock sovkhozes and mechanized hay-mowing stations were created, which put an end to the nomadic system of farming.

Well-planned settlements sprang up where previously only infrequent nomad tents, mud huts and dugouts were to be found. Many things linked with the old social customs, morals and manners disappeared: the tall mud walls, which concealed the family's internal life, and the horns of the mountain sheep, which were supposed to protect the home and the family against the evil eye. Homes began to be built front on the street and with windows (the Turkmen mud huts had no windows). The Turkmen villages have homes built to standard plans, schools, stores, kindergartens and nurseries, hotels and clubs. The people live in new homes surrounded by fruit trees, which have transformed not only the appearance but also the microclimate of the communities. While the mud huts held no furniture and the people ate and slept on a dirt floor covered with strips of felt, every home now has bedrooms, elegant living rooms, refrigerators, television sets and so forth.

The "Sovet Turkmenistana" Kolkhoz in Gyaurskiy Rayon can be used as an example to illustrate the changes which have taken place. In the not-too-distant past a remote camp for nomad herdsmen was located on the territory

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which now contains the kolkhoz. The kolkhoz central farmstead could now be called nothing other than a garden-city. The settlement was built according to a general plan, with the stone houses of the kolkhoz workers arranged along both sides of the straight streets. Radio and television antennas rise above the roofs and the houses are connected with electric power and television lines. A dining hall, a tailoring shop, watch and shoe repair shops, a barber shop, a photograph studio, a savings bank and stores selling manufactured goods, food and household items have been opened in the settlement. It contains a 600-seat Palace of Culture, a 500-seat summer club, a library, a hospital, an out-patient clinic, a children's center, a broadcast relay center and six general education schools, one of them a secondary school.

It is just such kolkhozes which reflect the modern life-style of Turkmen villages.

Resolution of the problem of rural housing, an extremely important factor in living conditions, has been an important accomplishment of socialism. A total of almost of 5 million square meters of housing has been built in republic villages in the past 10 years alone.

The well being of every Soviet family, the morale of the people, the amount of time available for the workers' rest and relaxation, schooling, the rearing of the children, and so forth, depend to a great degree upon how well the consumer service is organized.

The task of converting the consumer service into a large and highly developed sector of the national economy was brought up and thoroughly clarified at the 24th and 25th CPSU Congresses. "Consumer services," A. N. Kosygin said at the 24th CPSU Congress, "must be developed today as a large mechanized branch."⁶

The 25th CPSU Congress advanced the task of "increasing the volume of consumer services for the public 1.5-fold under the 10th Five-Year Plan, with a 1.7-fold increase in the rural area."⁷ A great deal is also being done in our republic to improve consumer services for the public. The volume of consumer services is to increase 1.66-fold under the 10th Five-Year Plan, with a 1.93-fold increase in the rural area.

The number of dry-cleaning plants, mechanized laundries, repair shops, combines and other consumer service enterprises has increased in republic villages in recent years. The 1974 per capita value of consumer services performed in the republic was 12 rubles 47 kopecks, with 16 rubles 62 kopecks worth of services performed for each urban dweller and only 8 rubles 57 kopecks worth for each rural resident. In 1976, however, the figure had already risen to 17 rubles 31 kopecks worth of services for each rural residence. While consumer services for the rural population accounted for only 22 percent of all types of services performed in 1970, the figure was 36.6 percent in 1976.

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It is apparent that a great deal is being done and will continue to be done on a practical level to improve the lives of the rural population. And this is contributing directly to the overcoming of the old ways of life.

By restructuring the rural economy socialism has created a new type of peasant, brought him into the stream of public and political life and transformed the peasant mentality. The production sphere is a more dynamic aspect of public life than the everyday life style of the people, which contains a certain degree of conservatism, a certain amount of individualism. The daily life style is changing slowly. And its transformation depends greatly upon the city. The city has considerable influence upon the renewal process. The powerful spiritual arsenal of theaters, movies, the press, radio, television, and so forth, is concentrated there. Utilizing these facilities, the city brings to the village the treasures of socialist culture and science and helps to overcome the old reactionary customs, ceremonies and habits. By means of trade and various forms and types of consumer services the city exerts a determining influence upon the development of modern tastes and habits in the peasants. All of this is helping to overcome remnants of the rural economic, cultural and domestic backwardness.

At the same time, we must not regard this process as a simple shifting of the city way of life to the village, the mechanical imposing of city stereotypes upon the rural area. While adopting the new and progressive from city life, the village is retaining many specific features and traditions of its way of life. This becomes clear when we consider rural house-building and architecture. More than 50 percent of all families in the rural area have 5 to 10 members. This fact cannot be ignored in the planning of new settlements.

Modern architecture must establish its place in the rural area and conform to the new life style. The peasant's housing should be modern and should be adapted as much as possible to today's rural living conditions, taking sensible traditions into account.

Changes in the ways in which the cultural and everyday needs of rural residents are satisfied are also highly important in the development of the new life style, in the campaign against religious and family traditions. Every ethnic group, of course, including the Turkmen, has its own special clothing. Because of the improved cultural level and broader contact with members of our nation's different peoples and ethnic groups in the process of building socialism and communism, the people, especially the youth, have taken a liking to the modern styles of clothing, which have been adopted by almost all the peoples of the world. This is without question a progressive development, a manifestation of the objective natural pattern of development of the national cultures.

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It should be pointed out, however, that while in the Turkmen rural family the male is free to choose what he wears and no one prevents him from wearing either the ethnic costume or European clothing, most of the women are more limited in this respect by tradition.

There would be no need to discuss women's clothing, if not for the fact that there were degrading elements in the Turkmen woman's clothing, items such as the yashmak,⁸ the purendzhek⁹ and so forth, and if the adherents of the old attitude toward the woman would not attempt to use the ethnic women's clothing with its religious elements as a banner for the fight against the new and progressive clothing styles which have become a part of the Turkmen women's life. Each year sees an increase in the number of Turkmen women and girls wanting to wear European styles or advanced ethnic clothing. The old attire, which enshrouded the woman from head to toe and the shapeless dresses are gradually disappearing. They are being replaced by lighter, comfortable clothing. Formerly, Turkmen women had to make their dresses out of red cloth. Now, not only the urban women but rural women as well make their dresses of various colors and out of diverse fabrics.

Rural women previously went to work in the long, loose-fitting dresses, which naturally created a great deal of inconvenience. Today, however, female Turkmen machine operators wear modern work clothes.

This does not at all mean that all of the rural residents must immediately switch to the modern types of clothing. European women's clothing cannot be mechanically established in the rural area, for example. In the 1960's the Ashkhabad Fashion House attempted to resolve the problem in just this sort of unimaginative manner. They designed European-style women's dresses. They made dresses for the Turkmen women from these patterns, but there was no demand for them and most of them were discarded. Is this not proof of the fact that we need creative redesigning of the traditional ethnic women's clothing and the creation of attractive and comfortable styles?

Great changes have taken place in the ethnic cuisine. It has become more varied and multinational. Russian pel'meni, Ukrainian borsht, Caucasian shish kebab, Uzbek manty and somsa and others, have become a part of Turkmen life.

We know, of course, that Islam forbids the eating of pork. Faithful Turkmen attempted to avoid visiting those neighbors who ate pork. The situation has now changed. Turkmen, especially the youth, have actually changed their attitude toward pork.

Some of them still refrain from eating pork, to be sure. It would probably not be correct to attribute this to religious beliefs, however. It is most frequently a simple matter of custom.

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Hog raising is a profitable branch of animal husbandry, and many kolkhozes and sovkhozes are developing it. The Kolkhoz imeni Kalinin and the Kolkhoz imeni Kuybyshev in Murgabskiy Rayon, Maryyskaya Oblast, have fulfilled scheduled deliveries of meat to the state exclusively with pork. And while 10 or 15 years ago the question of finding hog tenders was a big problem on the kolkhozes, the youth now willingly go to work on the hog farms.

One might wonder what all of this has to do with atheistic indoctrination? The freeing of the people from religious biases, however, involves eliminating the old way of life, the old traditions and customs upon which Islam depends. And life styles, customs and manners are composed of numerous elements, even apparently insignificant ones. Minor things cannot be ignored in the process of overcoming obsolete traditions.

The socioeconomic reforms accomplished in the rural area have contributed to the radical altering and development of societal life. The kolkhozes have become not only the primary production units but also the organizers of consumer services for the rural residents. Considerable amounts of the public funds are now being spent to meet the cultural needs and to provide consumer services for members of the artel on many progressive kolkhozes in the republic. The children are fed at kolkhoz expense in kindergartens and nurseries and at summer Pioneer camps, and students in the beginning grades receive free meals at many schools. More and more frequently the kolkhozes are issuing free passes to health sanatoria and vacation facilities for their workers.

A cultural revolution was essential to the molding of the new man, along with developing our socioeconomic potential. The cultural revolution "took the working masses out of spiritual enslavement and ignorance, and accustomed them to the cultural treasures assembled by mankind. The nation, with most of its population illiterate, took a gigantic leap toward the pinnacles of science and culture."¹⁰ is how the CPSU Program rates the importance of the cultural revolution carried out in the Soviet Union.

The mass abandonment of religion by our nation's workers would have been inconceivable without the cultural revolution, without the elimination of illiteracy, the molding of the new, Soviet intelligentsia and the development of science and art. Its practical accomplishment involved enormous difficulties, however.

The cultural revolution in Turkmenia had its own specific historical peculiarities. The main difficulty lay in the fact that it was launched among a population with an extremely low level of culture, with complete illiteracy and lacking a written language and the material foundation (schools, a press, libraries, information media, theaters, museums and so forth).

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One must take into account, firstly, the multi-ethnic composition of the republic's population and secondly, the way of life of the Turkmen livestock raising tribes. Their level of literacy was naturally lower than that of the republic as a whole. In the third place, a special approach had to be taken in eliminating illiteracy among the women. Fourthly, prior to 1928 the Soviet school was forced to combat the influence of confessional religious schools--the mekteb and medrese--upon the local population.

These were especially solidly established in the auls of Chardzhouskiy, Kerkinskiy and Tashauzskiy districts. Suffice it to say that 170 confessional schools were operating in Chardzhouskiy District in 1926. The mektebs and medrese engaged not so much in giving the children literacy as in indoctrinating them in a spirit of Moslem "piety." The students memorized prayers and parts of the Koran and other religious books written in the Arab and Persian languages. On the one hand, these mektebs and medrese served as one means of reproducing religion, while on the other, they trained spreaders of Islam--mullahs, akhuns and others. The Moslem clergy did everything possible to counter the Soviet school with the old system of mektebs and medrese. There were cases of brutal reprisals against teachers and of the burning and destruction of textbooks, training aids, school equipment and so forth by fanatics.

Speaking at the eighth party congress, V. I. Lenin underscored the following: "What can we do in the case of such peoples as the Kirgiz, Uzbeks, Tadzhiks and Turkmen, who are still under the influence of their mullahs?...Can we go to these peoples and say: 'We will throw aside your exploiters?' We cannot do this, because they are entirely under the power of their mullahs."¹¹ The task was primarily one of overcoming the centuries-old submission of the Turkmen to "their" mullahs, of destroying the chains with which Islam shackled the life of the people.

The conversion of Turkmen writing from the Arabic alphabet to a Latinized one in 1928-1929 dealt a major blow to Islam and the Moslem clergy. For many centuries, of course, the Turkmen people used the Arabic alphabet, which was poorly suited for representing the sounds of the Turkmen language. The reform of the written language had an enormous role in the development of the Turkmen school and accelerated the elimination of illiteracy among the population, because the new alphabet was far more simple than the Arabic one. It also simplified the conversion of Turkmen writing to a Russian graphic basis in 1940, which played an enormous role in bringing the achievements of Russian and world culture to the Turkmen people.

This reform was also an important step toward the overcoming of the obsolete culture with its submission to Islam. In the situation of mass illiteracy and ignorance, anything written in the Arabic alphabet, regardless of what it said, was regarded as "sacred," a fact frequently exploited

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by the Moslem clergy. The replacement of the "sacred" writing could not fail to be highly important in the campaign against Islam, against its traditions and customs in the awareness and life of the Turkmen people. And in the 1920's and the beginning of the 1930's the reactionary Moslem clergy carried out an open offensive, a "holy war," against the Latinized alphabet. It was unable to resist the popular masses' widespread desire for knowledge, however.

"The greatest source of religious superstitions," V. I. Lenin said, "is poverty and ignorance, and we must combat this evil."¹² Mass illiteracy had already been eliminated in Turkmenia in the 1930's. While literacy had only been raised to 59 percent of the republic population by 1935, it reached 80 percent at the end of 1939.¹³ Illiteracy is now a thing of the past. The republic is covered with a dense network of schools. It has six VUZ's, at which specialists are trained in more than 40 fields. More than 60,000 students study there and at 31 secondary specialized educational institutions. A total of 380 out of every 1000 people in the republic are now in school. The republic has its own Academy of Sciences. A total of 4,634 scientists work at republic scientific institutions and VUZ's, 92 of which are doctors and 1,714 are candidates of sciences.

The constantly growing network of cultural and informational establishments is graphic proof of the remarkable changes occurring in the republic's cultural life. Turkmenistan now has 1,271 public libraries, more than 950 clubs, 9 professional theaters and concert organizations, 11 museums, 900 film projectors, 24 culture and recreation parks, 47 music and art schools, 2 music academies and a state pedagogical institute of the arts.

The amount of fiction, political and scientific and technical literature published in Turkmenistan is increasing by the year. Around 482 books, totaling 4.4 million copies, are now published in the republic, including 220 books in around 4 million copies in the Turkmen language. More than 35 magazines and other periodicals are printed in Turkmenia, including 9, with a combined circulation of 10.5 million, in the Turkmen language, and 41 newspapers with a total circulation of 150 million, 29 of which are issued in the local language.

The social and cultural revolutions created the material preconditions for the qualitative transformation of the people's spiritual makeup. Radical changes have occurred in all areas of life: in the day-to-day life of the people as a whole and in their consciousness and conduct as individual. Truly humanitarian moral standards are being established, reactionary customs and obsolete manners are being discarded, and the bounds of the former, narrow world, limited to the communal and family group, are being broken. As it was being implanted in the daily lives and affairs of the people, socialist culture has given them a scientific-materialistic view of the world, a view which, in V. I. Lenin's words, is the only "proper expression of the interests, the point of view and the culture of the revolutionary proletariat."¹⁴

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The accomplishment of the cultural revolution created conditions favorable to the antireligious indoctrination of the masses and to the eradication of remnants of the religious way of life. K. Marx said in an interview with a correspondent of the newspaper CHICAGO TRIBUNE more than 100 years ago: "Religion will disappear to the extent that socialism develops."¹⁵ Turkmenia's experience has vividly demonstrated the correctness of this conclusion. The socioeconomic and cultural changes taking place have produced a drastic reduction in the religiousness of the population.

In the first place, the socialist culture is based on a scientific, materialistic world outlook, on the principles of Marxism-Leninism, that is, on a Weltanschauung which is totally the opposite of the religious outlook.

In the second place, the accomplishment of the cultural revolution and the publicizing of scientific knowledge showed millions of simple people the groundlessness of religious dogmas and gave them an idea of the power of the human intellect. The enlightenment of the working masses prepared them to accept atheistic principles.

In the third place, it was during the cultural revolution that cadres were developed, capable of explaining from a materialistic standpoint the source of religiousness and its causes, of exposing the erroneousness of religious views from a scientific standpoint and of substantiating the correctness of the scientific-materialistic view of the world.

Finally, the socialist culture extols the heroic spirit of labor, instills in the individual pride in his nation and respect for science, and makes him aware of his human dignity. It thereby contributes to the atheistic indoctrination of the Soviet people.

The cultural revolution brought the cultural level of the rural area close to that of the city. In his last articles, V. I. Lenin devoted a great deal of attention to the task on the cultural front, especially in the rural area. The leader of the proletariat spoke of the fact that the peasant masses must themselves fight for the cause of cultural development.

Because of their ignorance and illiteracy, and due to a number of other factors, including their dependency upon the forces of nature, peasants are more religious than workers. "Peasants," said N. K. Krupskaya, "even those who know very well just what a thunderstorm and other natural phenomena are, are still inclined to attribute the timeliness of rain and so forth to the will of God. 'God always looks after us,' they say. Workers, who frequently know no more about natural phenomena than do the peasants, are far less religious: They feel not so much a dependency upon God as a dependency upon the foreman, upon the factory director."¹⁶

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Following V. I. Lenin's instructions, the Turkmenistan Communist Party has linked all important economic changes in the rural area with the need for cultural reform of the daily life and awareness of the peasants, which has helped to eliminate remnants of the religious way of life. "When we raise the issue of the cultural revolution," M. I. Kalinin wrote, "it is essentially a problem of totally altering the daily life, the mentality and the attitudes of the people."¹⁷

Religious items began gradually to disappear from the homes of the Turkmen peasants. On the walls of modern apartments the talisman, the dagdan and quotations from the Koran and other religious books have been replaced with prints and reproductions of paintings. The previously empty rooms are now embellished with matching furniture, television sets, bookcases, shelves and racks, refrigerators....

The cultural revolution created a rural intelligentsia. More than 22,000 teachers, around 10,000 agricultural specialists, around 2,000 doctors and around 2,000 workers with cultural and educational establishments now work in the rural Turkmen area. Consequently, practically every home has its agronomist or engineer, doctor or animal specialist, teacher or worker with a cultural and educational establishment, poet or writer.... The work they perform among the public and among the members of their families, their conduct and personal example are helping the other members of their families and their fellow villagers to live in the new style, to discard illusory religious concepts of the world and of man.

The role of the rural intelligentsia has not been limited to the activities we have mentioned. It takes an active part in the dissemination of books, the development of folk creativity, the aesthetic development of the rural workers, and so forth.

Our discussion of the cultural revolution's importance with respect to eliminating remnants of the religious way of life would not be complete without mentioning the role of medicine and public health, our successes in which are of considerable importance in this matter. Such diseases as malaria, smallpox, favus, aden ulcer, trachoma and many others have been totally eliminated in Turkmenia during the years of Soviet power. Numerous medical establishments have been created in the villages, with modern medical equipment and preventive facilities. Large-scale measures conducted by the party and government to develop the public health service helped to strengthen the health of the da'ikhans, to extend their life expectancy and considerably to reduce the death-rate for children and the incidence of children's diseases.

All of this is making it possible for the believers to become aware of the illusory nature of religious concepts of diseases as punishment from God.

We have briefly described the process of accomplishing the cultural revolution in Turkmenistan, its specific features and its importance for the elimination of remnants of the religious way of life.

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The increased economic power of the kolkhozes, the electrification and intensification of agriculture, the development of interkolkhoz production ties, the conversion of farm labor into a variety of industrial work and the creation of consumer service enterprises and cultural and amenities establishments are all factors playing an ever-increasing role in the gradual elimination of distinctions between rural life and life in the city.

Those differences which have remained are due to the continuing existence of manual labor in agriculture; the gap between cultural life in the village and that in the city, and a number of other factors.

How daily life is organized and its cultural level greatly affect the indoctrination of the upcoming generation, the solidarity of the family and success in overcoming relics of the past, harmful traditions and customs, which still exist in various forms in the minds and behavior of individual people.

The new life must therefore be built with awareness and according to a plan. We cannot accept the opinion that it is enough simply to improve the people's economic situation and the new life will develop automatically, without the intervention of party, Komsomol, trade union soviet and administrative agencies.

FOOTNOTES

1. V. I. Lenin, "Poln. sobr. soch." [Complete Collected Works], Vol 41, pp 304-305.
2. A. V. Lunacharskiy, "Pochemu nel'zya verit' v boga" [Why One Must Not Believe in God], Moscow, 1965, p 287.
3. Ibid., p 286.
4. V. I. Lenin, "Poln. sobr. soch.," Vol 32, p 187.
5. Sanashik, the annual division of land and water among all members of the tribe.
6. "Materialy XXIV s"yezda KPSS" [Materials of the 24th CPSU Congress], Moscow, 1971, p 180.
7. "Materialy XXV s"yezda KPSS," p 219.
8. Yashmak, a scarf with which the women covered their mouth, a mark of submissiveness.
9. Purendzhek, a scarf with which young women covered their face.

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10. "XIII s"yezda KPSS. 17-31 oktyabrya 1961 g. Stenograficheskiy otchet" [The 22d CPSU Congress, 17-31 October 1961: A Stenographic Report], Vol III, Moscow, 1962, p 237.
11. V. I. Lenin, "Poln. sobr. soch.," Vol 38, pp 158-159.
12. Ibid., Vol 37, p 186.
13. "Istoriya Turkmenistana" [A History of Turkmenistan], Ashkhabad, 1966, p 358.
14. V. I. Lenin, "Poln. sobr. soch.," Vol 41, p 337.
15. K. Marx and F. Engels, "Ob ateizme, religii i tserkvi" [On Atheism, Religion and the Church], Moscow, 1971, p 470.
16. N. K. Krupskaya, "Voprosy ateisticheskogo vospitaniya" [Issues of Atheistic Indoctrination], Moscow, 1964, pp 161-162.
17. M. I. Kalinin, "O kommunisticheskoy vospitanii" [On Communist Indoctrination], p 62.

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RELIGIOUS SURVIVALS IN DAILY LIFE AND OVERCOMING THEM

As previously mentioned, most believers limit themselves to observing only the rituals of a certain religion. The religious cult is the thread linking the vast majority of believers with religion. This is why the clergy, including the Moslem clergy, makes such an effort to preserve their rituals, customs and celebrations. The theologians attempt to prove that these came into being exclusively as a result of the fact that man is innately drawn to his creator. Science, however, has established the fact that customs and rituals began to develop even before the development of religion, as a phenomenon of social life.

Professor S. A. Tokarev used studies made by Soviet and foreign ethnographers, specialists in folk-lore and historians of religion to show that the traditional popular rituals are not based on religious concepts at all, but on motives involving man's financial, strictly practical activity. He points out that "various calendar rituals and rituals connected with cultivation of the land, the raising of livestock and the trades grew up not out of superstitious, religious and magical beliefs, but out of the practical work experience of ancient man, the hunter, the tiller of the soil. And it was not until later that these rituals came to be conceived as acts of magic, as magic incantations to increase the harvest, to attract game or fish or to alter the weather, and not until even later were they combined with concepts of spirits and gods and complicated with the addition of various prayers, sacrificial offerings and religious rites."¹

The clergy understood perfectly the significance of popular rituals and customs and their role in influencing people's feelings, emotionally and psychologically, and attempted to gain ascendancy over them. Many popular rituals and holidays were therefore given religious form and turned into a means of spreading religious ideology, and helped the dominant classes to subjugate the working people spiritually. The church used rituals to shape and regiment all aspects of man's daily life, and ascribed a religious essence to the most important events in man's existence.

The spread of Islam to Central Asia, including Turkmenia, added an Islamic coloring to numerous rituals and customs which were a part of the national life style. Every ceremony began to be performed with the participation of representatives of the clergy: imams, ishans, mullahs, and so forth. Ceremonies, celebrations and rites began to be associated with the reading of verses from the Koran. Purely Islamic customs also entered the people's daily life. They include the "sunnet," or circumcision; the "sunnet toy," the celebration of the circumcision; the "pigamber toy," a ceremony performed by Turkmen upon reaching the age of 63 years; the quintuplicate prayer; the "uraza-bayram," a holiday

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celebrating the end of the month-long uraza fast; and the kurban-bayram, a celebration involving sacrificial offerings. At the will of Islamic clergy they became general Moslem holidays.

Some existing, reactionary traditions, rituals and customs such as the "adaglamak" (an agreement made between parents on the future wedding of their children), the "gan almak" (vendetta), the "khun almak" (ransom for one killed) and others were adopted and upheld by Islam.

Islam also sanctioned other customs such as the "dakylma" (a custom requiring a widowed woman to become the wife of her deceased husband's brother), the "kaly" (bride-money), and others.

Religious survivals in the consciousness and conduct of believers are being overcome as a result of social reforms and the development of culture and education. It is true, however, that for a number of reasons this process is making slower headway in Islam than in other religions. Mainly social and historical factors are responsible for the preservation of Islamic beliefs and traditions among Turkmenistan's population. Turkmenia, of course, like the other republics of Central Asia, went from feudalism to socialism without passing through the capitalist stage of development. The centuries-old traditions and manners are therefore stronger. "The traditions of all past generations," K. Marx wrote, "weigh upon the minds of the living like a nightmare."²

Differences between the city and the village and between mental and physical work, the remnants of inequality between men and women in their daily life and carryovers from the community and tribal ties have a great deal to do with the preservation of surviving elements of Islam.

Like other religions, Islam developed an extensive system of religious holidays, ceremonies and rituals over the centuries, which covered the main stages in a person's life. They became so solidly established in daily life that they continue even among nonbelievers.

The nature of the work in the rural area--a long workday during the busy period of field work, the frequently strenuous physical work and the non-existence of days off during certain periods--makes it difficult to organize the leisure time of the people. Agricultural work in the republic's cotton growing areas has its own peculiarities. Cotton crops require labor and care the year round.

The activeness of the Moslem clergy, their efforts to adapt Islam to the new circumstances, our deficiencies in ideological and indoctrinational work in general, and in scientific-atheistic indoctrination particularly, are also factors contributing to the tenacity of religious survivals in the life of the Turkmen village.

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Contemporary bourgeois propaganda is also playing an important role in the nurturing of religion. Socialism's enemies and those opposed to friendship among peoples endeavor to exploit Islam for their own purposes. Such traitors to the homeland as Kayum Khan, Baymurze Khayt and others, based in Munich, slander the Soviet system in Central Asia, falsify the policy of the party and the state toward Islam and toward believers, and attempt to depict the Moslem religion as the true guardian of the national culture, customs and traditions, using radio broadcasts beamed at Central Asia and written material, which they attempt to smuggle into the country. In recent years nationalistic centers abroad stepped up their subversive activities against the Soviet Central Asian republics, including Turkmenia.

Sociological studies show that broadcasts in the Turkmen language from the "Gorgan" radio station in Iran are contributing to the preservation of survivals of religious life in certain border rayons (Kara-Kalinskiy, Bakhardenskiy, Kaakhkinskiy, Serakhskiy).

The problem of the religiousness of women should be given special attention.

We must not forget the fact that the mode of life is greatly determined specifically by the woman's social status. In the large Turkmen families the woman plays a very important role in rearing the rising generation. The attitude toward her and her status in the family determine the moral-psychological atmosphere in which the individual matures.

The problem of overcoming religiousness in Turkmenia is in a certain sense one of overcoming religiousness among women, because 75 to 80 percent of the religious in the republic are women. Many archaic survivals of the past with respect to the woman have become interwoven with Islam and are supported by the clergy and proponents of the old ways.

It is our opinion that a number of social, domestic, psychological and ideological factors account for the preservation of survivals of the old attitude toward women and for religiousness in the woman.

One of the reasons for the continuing religiousness among women is the fact that we have still not universally created the conditions necessary to make her situation easier, primarily in the areas of daily life, the rearing of children and housekeeping. The Communist Party is devoting a great deal of attention to the problem of easing the woman's work and reducing the amount of time she spends on the daily needs of the household. This is not an easy thing to do. It requires time. Although the level of consumer services for the rural population has risen markedly, it still falls far short of that provided for city dwellers. There are still not always enough nurseries, kindergartens, domestic service establishments, kolkhoz bakeries, dairy shops, tailoring shops and other facilities, which make it easier for the women to bring up the children and manage the household.

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We must not fail to mention deficiencies in the operation of preschool establishments in the rural area. In the first place, not all of the nurseries and kindergartens function the year round. In Maryyskiy Rayon in 1973, for example, only 2 of 19 kolkhozes had children's facilities operating the year round. Nurseries and kindergartens on the other farms operate seasonally, only when the farmwork is in full swing. In the winter, when the women are more or less relieved of working in the fields, the children's facilities are closed. Things like this are a result of the poorly organized operation of kindergartens and nurseries and are not due to the poor economic situation of the kolkhozes and sovkhoses.

In the second place, the preschool establishments are in poor shape with respect to regular teachers and nurses. The shortage of qualified workers is felt especially in brigade and kolkhoz nurseries and kindergartens. The teachers there are frequently old or elderly people with inadequate training. The farm managers prefer to use the girls and young women, who have a secondary education, in the cotton harvest. "The young women pick more cotton, so let the elderly and old women babysit!" certain kolkhoz chairmen say. There would appear to be some logic in this. At the same time, however, such statements attest to the fact that some managers have still not grasped the enormous importance of preschool institutions in providing normal working conditions for the working women or for rearing the rising generation.

There is no question that the above-mentioned deficiencies in consumer services for the rural population are creating serious difficulties for the ideological and cultural development of women. A highly-developed culture cannot be created, after all, unless the woman has a share in it. In his speech to the first Congress of the Turkmenistan Communist Party, Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin made the following statement: "Without women we will not create a culture. We need to ask ourselves once and for all: What sort of culture can there be, which excludes one half of the human race? It is clear that this culture can only be created when it extends from top to bottom, when it involves both the man and the woman."³

Certain traditions of daily life, still alive in the daily life of the people, are also contributing to the perpetuation of religious survivals among women. Some of them still lack the courage to break with the old traditions and customs established by the shari'a. Take a husband and wife who both work outside the home, for example. After work, however, the husband does not help his wife around the house, but goes out to social gathering places alone, while the wife hesitates to stand in his way and does not demand that he help her in the household. As a result, all of the housework and the rearing of the children is loaded onto the woman. "In most cases," V. I. Lenin said, "housework is the most unproductive, the most primitive and the most burdensome of jobs performed by the woman. It is extraordinarily petty work and involves nothing which would contribute anything whatsoever to the woman's development."⁴

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Such women have no time to engage in public work, to read books, newspapers or magazines, to listen to the radio or go to movies. She does not keep abreast of life and can never become entirely free of religious survivals. An obedient wife, she makes it possible for the husband and his relatives to treat her as the wives of Central Asian landowners were treated.

Carry-overs from the old attitude toward the woman and religiousness among rural women are also a result of the fact that the conservative segment of the old men and women serve as their living agents, exerting an unwholesome influence upon the young generation. Elderly people should be treated with respect, of course, but this does not mean that their demands should always be regarded as law, especially when they are in conflict with the logic of our life today and perpetuate harmful traditions.

We also believe that the distribution of labor between men and women prevalent today is one of the major reasons for the religiousness of Turkmen women. The mechanized jobs are performed mainly by the men, while the heavy manual labor is left to the woman. The fact that girls marry young and are tied to the home also hinders their cultural and educational development.

The Moslem clergy takes an active role in the preservation of religious survivals in the consciousness and the daily life of women. They exploit a lack of concern for this or that female kolkhoz worker on the part of the collective or the farm leaders, as well as natural disasters and the personal grief of people. During the Great Patriotic War, for example, many women lost husbands, sons and daughters. Naturally, this caused them great suffering. And the clergy intensified the women's feelings, offering them religious consolation, which is willingly grasped by an individual at a difficult time in life. Representatives of the clergy also exploited natural disasters for their propaganda purposes, such disasters as the earthquake which devastated Ashkhabad in 1948, creating a lot of grief for the people. The mullahs claimed that this was Allah's punishment for man's sins, for losing faith in God. They called for stronger faith, in order to avoid such disasters in the future.

The ishans, mullahs, sheikhs and medzhurs actively enlist their wives, sisters and female relatives to work among the women. They engage in the "healing" of female illnesses, recite prayers and explain the religious and family duties of Turkmen women according to the shari'a.

In recent years certain elements of Islamic dogma and religious practices have been adapted to the changes taking place in the status of women. Mullahs and ishans no longer openly oppose women's participation in socially useful labor, permit them to go to mosques and to visit so-called "holy places," and so forth. This does not represent a basic change in the treatment of women, however, but a certain shifting of stress in the forms and methods used to influence her.

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How the children are brought up affects the future of religion. Research has shown that the majority of believers were religious from childhood. It is more difficult to make a believer out of an adult with a developed materialistic view of the world. This is why the clergy employ the most diverse means and methods in their attempt to spread their influence to the rising generation. They understand that the woman is the mother of the children, the one who rears them. Respect for the mother, for the parents, is one of the most ancient traditions of the Turkmen people. Ministers of the Moslem religion try to take advantage of this tradition, admonishing the women as to the need to bring their children up in the Islamic faith.

The clergy cannot help being troubled by the fact that the woman is taking an active part in the republic's economic and cultural life. In the Turkmenistan economy 42 percent of the workers are women, and the figure is 50.4 percent for rural workers.⁵ Society's concern for the Turkmen woman and her active involvement in social life are resulting in the mass abandonment of religion by women. It is this process which is prompting the Moslem clergy to step up their struggle to keep women religious.

The factors contributing to the retention of religion among women include a conciliatory attitude toward survivals from the past, which is demonstrated extremely clearly in some places. Instead of constantly setting a positive personal example in their families and lives, and conducting a determined campaign against the feudal-landowner customs and remnants of the patriarchal society, certain communists and Komsomol members take a liberal-conciliatory attitude toward these relics of the past. At work and at meetings they are atheists shattering the survivals of Islam, but in their personal life and in the family they permit the observance of religious customs and holidays and treat their wives and daughters in the old way themselves. It would be appropriate at this point to recall L. I. Brezhnev's words spoken from the rostrum at the 25th CPSU Congress to the effect that "a discrepancy between word and action, no matter what form it might take, is detrimental to economic development and, especially, to moral development."⁶

There are many deficiencies in the performance of administrative agencies. Sometimes when legal bodies and agencies of the public prosecutor bring to criminal trial individuals guilty of treating a woman in the old feudal-landowner manner, they do not delve thoroughly into the matter but limit themselves to superficial circumstances and do not reveal the underlying causes of this type of behavior. And the underlying causes of such an attitude are linked in one way or another to the continued existence of survivals of Islam.

Among the more intolerable manifestations of the old attitude toward the woman, which is based on dogmas contained in the shari'a, we should mention,

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first and foremost, the marrying off of underage girls, the kalym and kaytarma,⁷ and the prevention of girls from choosing a career and from continuing their education at higher educational institutions. Although very rarely, husbands still sometimes ridicule their wife, refuse to consider the woman's opinion in family and domestic matters, and so forth.

An article by the well-known Turkmen poetess Toushan Esenova, "The Hated Kalym," published in the 22 May 1974 issue of LITERATURNAYA GAZETA, did a great deal to bolster the battle against survivals of the past in the treatment of women.

On 20 June 1974 the Turkmenistan Communist Party Central Committee passed a special decree as a result of the article. The decree stated that one of the main factors contributing to the retention of the kalym among a certain segment of the population is the fact that many party, Komsomol and public organizations are not conducting a systematic and focused campaign against it. In some places they decided that the kalym had been eliminated and left the matter at that. Naturally, this resulted in a revival of that relic of the past.

The decree passed by the Turkmenistan Communist Party Central Committee became a militant program of action for republic party organizations in the campaign against the kalym and other harmful survivals. Long-range plans were compiled universally for overcoming remnants of the patriarchal system in the people's lives. These issues were discussed at meetings of the communists and at sessions of the women's councils and the councils of elders. The oral magazines--organs of the rayon and city women's councils and organizations of the "Znaniye" society--stepped up their efforts in this area considerably. More interesting activities are now being conducted by the girls clubs (there are now more than 1,000 in the republic) and women's lecture agencies.

I would like to make special mention of the village meetings conducted jointly with the elders, the youth and the rural intelligentsia. The above-mentioned article was extensively discussed at the meetings. The open exchange of opinions and criticism of specific agents of the archaic ways are all producing positive results.

It is not enough, of course, simply to raise the issue, to criticize and discuss. Organizational work is also needed. The kolkhoz and sovkhoz women's councils in Maryyskaya Oblast, for example, make a list of all the families needing help and surrounded the elderly people, widows and other single women with care and attention. The rearing of the young generation has top priority. The women's councils are concerned about the fate of every girl graduate. The councils have helped many of them to find a job to their liking and to deal with the difficulties of their first years at a tekhnikum or VUZ. The women's councils also monitor the lives and the work of the female specialists and check to see whether the capable organizers are promptly advanced to managerial positions.

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"Down with the kalym!"--this call is displayed in special recreation and reading rooms and on signboards set up at many brigade centers and clubs. Nor have the writers, moviemakers or composers ignored this important matter. The damage caused by this obsolete custom is demonstrated with emotion and convincingness in a number of their creations. Lecturers from party committees, members of the "Znaniye" society, political information workers and agitators are doing a great deal to make clear the reasons for the tenacity of a hideous practice such as the paying of bride-money. This is demonstrated just by the fact that more than 12,000 lectures were given on this subject last year by members of the "Znaniye" society alone.

The press, radio and television considerably intensified their campaign against relics from the past following passage of the decree by the Turkmenistan Communist Party Central Committee. There were many different articles, publications and reports condemning the kalym and kaytarma and other relics from the past in the treatment of women.

I would like to tell about one good project initiated by the editors of the newspaper SOVET TURKMENISTANA, the organ of the Turkmenistan Communist Party Central Committee, which was later taken up by other party newspapers, by television and radio. The newspaper printed an article, "We Should Think About It, Before Starting," which launched more than a year of discussion in the newspaper on traditions, the new rituals, including weddings, and the negative aspects of the kalym and the kaytarma. Elder republic journalist D. B. Esenov, author of the article and a great authority on Turkmen ceremonies and customs, explained the origin of the kalym and presented a number of interesting ideas on how to eliminate it, and on the establishment of the new Soviet civil ceremonies in the life of the population, and raised a large number of issues affecting the most diverse social groups. The editors received numerous comments and letters, dozens of which were published in the newspaper.

A few days after this article was published, the Turkmen television studio invited Hero of Socialist Labor Kizylgul' Annamukhammedov, deputy to the USSR Supreme Soviet and chairman of the "Kommunizm" kolkhoz in Turkmen-Kalinskiy Rayon, to appear on one of its programs. She has directed this kolkhoz for the past 27 years and has performed a great deal of diversified work to establish the new life style for the rural population. In 1976 alone 10 weddings were performed on the kolkhoz, using the new ceremony, and 15 births and naming ceremonies were performed in a festive setting. Many people are drawn to the harvest festival, shepherd's day festivities and send-offs for youth entering the Soviet Army.

The women of this kolkhoz made an appeal to the workers of Maryyskaya Oblast to step up the campaign against the kalym. In her talk, Kizylgul' Annamukhammedov not only shared the experience of the kolkhoz administration and of the party, Komsomol and other kolkhoz public organizations in establishing the new, civil family and domestic rituals and improving the

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quality of life, but also raised a number of issues, the resolution of which would contribute to the elimination of the kalym and kaytarma, and called upon every communist and every leader to demonstrate responsibility for the campaign against these hideous practices in our life.

A total of 27 large programs and productions dealing with the campaign against the kalym and the kaytarma were transmitted over republic television in 1976. Those appearing on the programs shared their thoughts about the new rituals and customs, criticized the old, harmful traditions and their practitioners, gave helpful advice and made specific suggestions for improving the work of party, soviet, Komsomol and other public organizations in this area.

This sort of discussion in the press or on the radio or television is very useful, because it helps to mold public opinion against relics of the past.

Days of international friendship among the women of Azerbaydzhan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, a seminar-meeting on "Increasing the Public-Political and Labor Activeness of Women in Light of Decisions Coming out of the 25th CPSU Congress and the 21st Congress of the Turkmenistan Communist Party," and other activities conducted by the republic women's council met with great public response. Scientific and practical conferences were held in all the oblasts in accordance with recommendations made at the seminar-meeting, with special sections studying problems involved in the campaign against the kalym.

Naturally, success in the campaign against the kalym is not determined by any single, successful action. This work must be conducted continuously and systematically. The Turkmenistan Communist Party Central Committee and the party obkoms, gorkoms and raykoms are therefore not removing this issue from the agenda.

The kalym is still alive. Erroneous interpretations of the meaning of this custom, of the reasons for its existence and of ways of overcoming it still persist. Many people believe that young people entering into marriage are the only ones to blame for the existence of the kalym. They base this argument on the fact that no man or woman can be forced into marriage today. This is basically a correct assertion, because a great deal does in fact depend upon the youth themselves.

There are also cases, however, in which young people marry for love, while their parents agree on the kalym behind their backs. Consequently, we cannot blame only the young people for the kalym's existence and we must not fail to consider the importance of harmful traditions still in existence in the family and the role of conservative-minded parents and people who still have the old attitudes toward the woman.

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No one sells a daughter today, of course, or threatens to punish her, should she refuse to obey. However, we cannot ignore the old tradition of bringing up girls inside the family. It is no secret that individual families still instill in them from childhood submission, absolute obedience, respect for the old traditions, and so forth. Girls brought up in this tradition are not always capable of going against the desires of their parents or relatives. They are the ones who sometimes marry men they do not love.

Because of this we must step up the educational work performed in this area in the schools and VUZ's and in the youth labor collectives. The young people should be acquainted with the fundamentals of Soviet law on the family and marriage, understand their rights and duties and know how to stand up for their love.

The improved welfare of the workers and good prospects for the continued improvement of economic conditions are producing a paradoxical situation: The amount of the kalym has been increasing in recent years. In order to "keep up with the times," many parents are not only laying out everything they have, but are even going into debt for many years ahead.

In connection with this issue, we have to turn to a statement made at the 25th congress of our party by Comrade L. I. Brezhnev, general secretary of the CPSU Central Committee: "It is essential, however, that the improvement in material circumstances be accompanied constantly by improvement of the ideological-moral and cultural level of the people. Otherwise, we may have a return to the philistine, petty bourgeois psychology."⁸ The increase in the size of the kalym is precisely such a relapse into the old attitudes.

Letters received from the workers by party organizations and the editors of newspapers and magazines, and talks made at assemblies and village meetings indicate that most people have a negative opinion of the kalym. Many of them still do not want to reject it, however. There are people who simply profit from it. These are the go-betweens and match-makers, who are doing everything within their power to preserve the custom.

There is yet another aspect, which was covered well in an article by well-known Turkmen writer B. Khudaynasarev in the newspaper TURKMENSKAYA ISKRA: "There are still many men, to our regret and shame, who would very much like to consider themselves feudal lords; he is the master and the wife, his slave, who must stay at home, bring up the children and serve the husband...." Such men, we should add, include many extremely well-educated men, who sometimes even occupy high positions in society. L. I. Brezhnev had just such people in mind, when he stated from the rostrum at the 25th CPSU Congress that "we still encounter people, who understand our policy and our principles but do not always follow them in their practical affairs."⁹

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Party organizations are expected to combat relics of the past, which are an insult to human dignity. There must be no compromising and no indifference in the campaign against the kalym. "In the battle against such phenomena (violations of the standards of socialist communal living--N.B.)," it was stated at the 25th CPSU Congress, "we must make full use of the opinion of the labor collective, of the critical statement in the press, of methods of persuasion and of the force of the law--all means available to us."¹⁰

We now have "modernized" forms of the kalym. This might be, for example, a gift for the girl's mother, referred to as wedding expenses or money for acquiring the girl's dowry. The girl's parents sometimes demand that the parents of her fiance help them buy a car or livestock, remodel the house, or something of this nature.

It is not difficult to see that all of this is a specious cover for the kalym. No matter what is done to accommodate the kalym to the new conditions, however, it remains essentially the same, continuing to pervert the foundations of true love, turning marriage into a buying and selling proposition, degrading human dignity and running counter to the nature of our society.

The kalym and kaytarma are encountered in the cities, but they are most commonly practiced in the rural area. We know that in the rural area the opinion of one's fellow-villagers has far greater weight than in the city. In their work of molding opinion the party organizations should rely upon the assistance of deputy kolkhoz chairmen for mass-cultural work, women's councils, girls clubs, councils for the establishment of the new rituals and the councils of elders, which have been created on every kolkhoz and sovkhov. Party organizations must coordinate their efforts.

The people are building a new life style, and they should be helped. The following is one typical example.

Ogul'gerek and Allanazar had known each other from childhood. The young people decided to marry. The girl's elderly parents took their decision as an insult, however: They were convinced that it was their job to find a husband for their daughter and, incidentally, to get a sizable price, the kalym, from him. A conflict developed, and members of the commission for performing the new wedding ceremonies came, to the young people's assistance. Commission Chairman K. Gorshayev, who is also chairman of the Kolkhoz imeni Makhtumkul' in Gyaurskiy Rayon, and other comrades met with the Karayev couple, had a thoroughgoing talk with them and explained the nature of Soviet family and marriage customs. This intervention by people they respected swayed the future bride's parents. Ogul'gerek and Allanazar celebrated a Komsomol-youth wedding.

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We have many girls today who are capable of fighting for their happiness and reject the demands made by the adat and the shari'a and we need to bring up more such girls. In this work we must devote our main attention to the comprehensive resolution of three main issues: the involvement of women in socially useful labor and public work; improvement of their general education and their vocational-technical level, the development of political awareness and enrichment of their spiritual side; and creation of the conditions necessary to achieve all this.

The ritual aspect and life style always had a dominant place under Islam. This is precisely why the campaign against religious holidays, rituals and old customs sanctified by Islam constitutes one of the main focuses in the atheistic education of the population.

We sometimes encounter prejudiced views on this problem. Some lecturers, journalists and leaders of public organizations regard the influence of religious rituals and customs as negative only insofar as it is harmful to the health. Certain customs and Islamic holidays, including the uraza and the kurban-bayram, do undermine the health of the people, of course, have a negative effect upon their work and increase family expenses. At the same time, however, we must not forget the fact that Islamic holidays and customs are harmful, first and foremost, in the social and ideological respect. They preserve the old feudal-landowner morals and customs and undermine friendship among people of different faiths, thereby hindering the communist indoctrination of the workers.

Group prayers, readings of religious books and discussions on Islam and on the power of its "prophets" are set up by the clergy for the uraza and kurban-bayram holidays. In some of the republic's communities those observing the fast gather in large groups on fast days to break their fast (agzachar) in the apartments of believers. Each group numbers up to 30 men. The women gather separately.

The host in the home where the people gather to break their fast prepares refreshments for his guests. Sometimes, schedules are even made up and a list is made indicating the sequence in which the believers are to be received. There have been cases in which people not even observing the uraza fast have conducted a fast-breaking gathering at their house. The local Moslem clergy take the attitude that those who hold a group agzachar with plenty of refreshments in their home are not required to observe the fast. The people believe this and think that they are observing Moslem instructions by such an act. It should be pointed out that the group agzachar is a new development, which has come into being in the past 10 to 15 years, because each individual observing the fast formerly celebrated it at home, with his family.

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Even though the main participants in this fast-breaking and prayer are mostly elderly people, the group agzachar also has a negative influence upon the youth. After all, there are frequently both children and young people in the home in which the fast-breaking celebration is held, and they hear conversation about Allah, the prophet Mohammed and the other "prophets" of Islam, and witness the group praying.

Recently, on uraza-bayram day in certain republic rayons, even in Ashkhabad, the mullahs have set up meetings to hear tape-recorded religious transmissions from the "Gorgan" radio station out of Iran. The Moslem clergy exploit the uraza celebration for purposes of "exchanging experience from their work," discuss the state of "spiritual work" with the youth and describe methods of drawing them into Islam.

There have been cases in Ashkhabad and in the republic's Ashkhabadskiy, Tedzhenskiy and Bakhardenskiy rayons in which preschool children, influenced by the clergy and their religious parents, have made the rounds of their neighbors and acquaintances on the eve of uraza, heralding with song the beginning of the fast.

It should be pointed out that the confessors at functioning mosques step up their activities during the uraza celebration. During the fast in 1976, for example, imams, mutavels and mosque "activists" in Tashauzskaya Oblast took a part in evening fast-breaking festivities in the apartments of believers and received from them a "fitr-sadaka" set at the amount of 50 kopecks per believer. The money was credited to the mosque fund. All of this is proof of the fact that the timeserving activities of the Moslem clergy are not always unsuccessful. They achieve their goal mainly in those communities, in those rayons and cities, in which party and public organizations have let the atheistic work take its course, where a liberal and conciliatory attitude is taken toward the mullahs, the spreaders of religious relics, and where proper attention is not given to organizing leisuretime activities and facilities for the people, especially the youth.

The clergy endeavor to depict such religious holidays as the kurban-bayram and the uraza-bayram as folk customs and traditions. They appeal to the national feelings of the people, especially the youth, who are not always capable of separating the national and the folk from the religious. And we have been aware for a long time, after all, that the kurban-bayram is a holiday involving sacrificial offerings and has a purely religious origin. The exploitative elite of the old society and the clergy were vitally interested in preserving and strengthening it. In Turkmenia, for example, the skin and the best part of the meat from a sacrificial animal went to the mullahs, the ishans, and their likes.

And today, despite a certain degree of change, the kurban-bayram is marked in the rural area essentially as a religious holiday.

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By way of adapting to the new circumstances, the Moslem clergy state that it is not mandatory on holidays to butcher a ram, a cow or a camel, that people may bring a chicken or even buy meat and cook pilaf with which to treat the mullah who reads the Koran. Some mullahs in Maryyskaya Oblast have replaced the offering of livestock as a sacrifice to God with the offering of money (in the amount of 40 to 50 rubles).

According to Islamic tradition it is considered pleasing to God not to work on the days of the kurban-bayram but to pray in the mosques and at "holy places." The modern Moslem clergy do not insist that this rule be observed. Nonetheless, many believers try to follow it.

The ministers of religion endeavor to depict kurban-bayram as a Turkmen national holiday. They try to set up large swings for those days (mainly in Ashkhabadskaya Oblast) and to install radio equipment where these are used by the youth. Not all of the boys and girls go to the swings to "rid themselves of their sins," of course--although there are some who do--but mainly for other reasons: to have fun, out of curiosity or, finally, to keep up with their friends. Some of them arrange to meet there on dates, because religious parents forbid their children to go to recreation spots on those days. Regardless of the reasons for which the youth go to the swings on religious holidays, however, the party and other public organizations should step up their work to halt such practices. After all, the clergy use such diversions to spread the ideology of Islam and to bring religion, its rituals and traditions, to the young people. We welcome the merrymaking of large groups of youth on Soviet holidays and at festivals, but we do not want them to gather for such activities on Moslem holidays, because this serves the purpose of stupifying the young people.

This is why it is so important to counter religious influence upon the emotions of the young people with a nonreligious one, to neutralize the influence of religious propaganda at the gathering sites for the group swinging. We should relay to those spots concerts by contemporary Turkmen performers and concerts of ethnic Turkmen music and the popular music of other peoples. Young people like to have fun, and we, and not the clergy, should take the initiative in arranging possibilities for this.

A significant shortcoming in our atheistic work lies in the fact that we underestimate the importance of emotional influence and consequently, ignore the emotional element in atheistic indoctrination. There is no question that religiousness involves the existence of certain religious notions in the individual. We have to fight these by working on the people's reason, on their consciousness, and publicize the achievements of modern science, achievements convincingly demonstrating the groundlessness of religious dogmas and concepts. However, "the break with religion and the transition to an atheistic stand are not alone the result of a specific thought process, of the intellectual comparison of religious dogmas and scientific principles. An awareness of the groundlessness of

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religious ideology in itself does not lead to a complete departure from religion, from a belief in the supernatural, and man does not always act in accordance with the new level of knowledge, in accordance with his intelligence level."¹¹

In order for a believer to abandon religion, the knowledge he acquires must become personal, profound and strong conviction and combined with feeling. The believer must experience the acquired knowledge emotionally, must perceive them not only with his intellect, but with his heart as well. The emotional processes affect the personality more thoroughly and more deeply than does the cognitive process alone. This is why our underestimation of emotional influence is making our atheistic work less effective.

Reality has demonstrated that scientific evidence against religion and arguments for its groundlessness in light of the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution are not always accepted by those believers whose religiousness is more a matter of tradition than of cognizance.

In Turkmenistan, where the religiousness of the indigenous population is mainly traditional, we cannot limit ourselves to scientific criticism of Islam but must seek ways of effecting an emotional influence upon religious feelings. We understand the task and are attempting to do everything possible to accomplish it.

FOOTNOTES

1. S. A. Tokarev, "Customs Are Not All the Same" in NAUKA I RELIGIYA, No 10, 1966, p 57.
2. K. Marx and F. Engels, "Soch." [Works], Vol 8, p 119.
3. TURKMENSKAYA ISKRA, 15 February 1925.
4. V. I. Lenin, "Poln. sobr. soch." [Complete Collected Works], Vol 39, p 202.
5. TURKMENSKAYA ISKRA, 29 June 1975.
6. L. I. Brezhnev, "Aktual'nyye problemy ideologicheskoy raboty" [Urgent Problems of Ideological Work], Vol 2, Moscow, 1978, p 173.
7. Kaytarma, the returning of a young wife to her parents until the full amount of the kalym has been paid.
8. "Materialy XXV s"yezda KPSS" [Materials of the 25th CPSU Congress], p 78.

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9. Ibid., p 77.
10. Ibid., p 78.
11. N. P. Andrianov, V. V. Pavlyuk and R. A. Lopatkin, "Osobennosti sovremennogo religioznogo soznaniya" [Peculiarities of the Contemporary Religious Consciousness], Moscow, 1966, p 235.

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NEW TRADITIONS AND THE FORMATION OF THE COMMUNIST LIFE STYLE

Turkmenistan's party and public organizations are employing various means in their campaign against the influence of religious customs and traditions. One of the main methods is that of introducing the new, nonreligious traditions and ceremonies into the daily life of the people.

By enriching the people's lives and making them more meaningful the new non-religious holidays, ceremonies, customs and traditions are helping to satisfy the spiritual and emotional needs of the workers and contributing to their aesthetic development.

Every social system develops certain customs in the people. Socialism has objectively created the conditions for new traditions conforming to the social relationships inherent in it. Rites, customs and manners left over from the feudal society and related to religious superstitions still exist, however. They do not relinquish their hold immediately. The new ways are conquering, however, and entering into the daily life of the people.

The appearance of new holidays, ceremonies and customs and their establishment in our way of life, and the dying out of the old, religious ways are both part of the same process.

Recently, the issue of nonreligious ceremonies and holidays has been continuously aired in newspapers and magazines, and they are discussed on television and radio and in pamphlets and books. Nonetheless, a great deal remains to be done in this area.

Along with criticizing religious rituals, we must create nonreligious holidays, customs and civil rituals and introduce them into the lives of the workers, utilizing certain elements of the old folk rituals, which are free of religious connotation.

Those who assume that the new ceremonies will force out all of the old ways are mistaken. In certain rayons in our republic, for example, the new wedding ceremonies were performed at first without the traditional folk games.

A folk custom, though, represents the experience of generations. We must take all the good elements contained in the old rituals. Certain rituals and customs involved in the old Turkmen wedding, for example, recall, as it were, the entire history of the people: the "goresh" wrestling speaks of their desire to bring up the youth strong, skillful and brave; the "at chapdyrmak" (races) tell how they valued swift-footed horses and skilled horsemen; the "altyn gabak aytdyrmak" (shooting match) make the statement that an accurate eye and a firm, true arm were needed in life; and the "bagshy aytdyrmak" (competition of singers) speaks of their love for music and song. All of these and many other customs are still worth preserving, enriching and developing today.

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Naturally, we cannot keep everything left to us from previous social systems. It does make sense, however, to make use of all that is valuable in our heritage. In her recollections of Lenin, K. Tsetkin quotes the following statement by him: "The beautiful should be preserved, taken as a model and used as a starting point, even when it is 'old.' Why should we turn our backs on that which is truly fine and reject it as a starting point for continued development simply because it is 'old'?"¹

We should thoroughly understand the significance of each element of our diverse heritage from the past. That ritual is good, which generates a feeling of joy in a person, inspires him to do good. In our opinion, this is the criterion for deciding whether to use folk rituals.

Many new traditions have become established in Turkmenia, as they have in the other fraternal republics, while certain old ones have acquired substance and forms in keeping with our way of life, with modern Soviet reality. This development of new ceremonies, using the traditional folk elements, is an especially vital process today.

It is not just the holidays and traditions common to a people, but household and family ones as well, which are playing an important role in the battle against survivals from the religious way of life, the struggle to develop a communist life style. These include the new wedding ceremonies, festivities marking the birth of a child, housewarmings, passport presentations, send-offs for youth entering the Soviet Army, ceremonies for individuals entering retirement, civil funerals....

The Eastern peoples have many peculiar ways in their family and marriage relationships. Islam created a large number of rituals and traditions reinforcing the woman's inequality in the marriage. For this reason we shall discuss in greater detail the development of new rituals in this area of our lives.

The ceremonial registration of the marriage and the Komsomol-youth wedding are in contrast not only to the religious wedding ceremony, but also to such feudal-landowner customs as the selling of brides, the marrying of underage girls, the segregation of women and the forbidding of girls to continue their education in the higher grades, at tekhnikums and institutes.

The new wedding rites, ceremonial and colorful, demonstrate the equality of men and women entering into marriage voluntarily and for love, and eliminate the intrusion of the clergy. At a new, Soviet wedding the bride sits at the table together with the husband of her choice and surrounded by girl friends (formerly, neither she nor any other women were allowed in male society), dances along with the guests, sings and enjoys herself. Also present are the bride's parents, who were forbidden under the old traditions to be present in the home of the groom at their daughter's wedding.

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According to Adat, "A girl is the same as a bag of nuts; she can be bought and sold." Formerly, a purchased bride never saw the bridegroom prior to the wedding. No one attached any serious importance to whether or not the girl would want to marry the man to whom she had been sold.

For centuries Islam taught Moslems to hate members of other religions. Islamic tradition permitted a Moslem man to marry a non-Moslem, but only under the condition that she be converted to Islam. A girl could not be given in marriage to a non-Moslem, however. Public opinion condemned even those Turkmen parents who married their daughters to Uzbeks, Tatars, and so forth, even though the latter were also Moslems.

The story of a Turkmen girl's love for a man of a different faith is brilliantly and vividly described by the Ukrainian poet P. A. Grabovskiy in his poem "Tekinka," a story which ends with the Turkmen girl being killed for her love for the Ukrainian, the Kossack Omel'ko.

Turkmenistan's youth, both in the cities and the rural area, are more and more frequently discarding the reactionary institutions of Islam. This is a result of the enormous amount of work performed by our party toward the international indoctrination of the Soviet people and the introduction of new traditions into our way of life. We have a great many examples of a young man, a Russian, Ukrainian or Belorussian, marrying a Turkmen girl and celebrating the wedding in the new manner. The number of marriages between members of different ethnic groups is growing. This is no longer condemned even by the old people. Of 1,873 marriages taking place in the city of Mary from 1971 to 1973, for example, 694 were mixed marriages.²

An international Komsomol-youth wedding took place on the "Sotsializm" Kolkhoz in Ashkhabadskiy Rayon on 23 July 1978, for example. The son of an elderly Turkmen shepherd, Ovlyakuli Annakuliyev, married the Ukrainian Yekaterina Grigor'yevna Pukh. Yekaterina Grigor'yevna was working at a textile combine in Kherson and Bayram Ovlyakuliyev was serving in the ranks of the Soviet Army in Khersonskaya Oblast. They met, came to love each other and decided to build a life together. The Council for the Establishment of New Ceremonies and Civil Rites at the "Sotsializm" Kolkhoz, headed by kolkhoz chairman G. Orazov, helped them to celebrate a formal wedding. The newlyweds and their parents were congratulated by D. B. Esenov, deputy chairman of the republic's Council for the Establishment of New Ceremonies and Civil Rituals in Everyday Life, by O. Dzhumayev, secretary of the party raykom, B. Odekov, secretary of the Komsomol raykom, and others. Amateur performers from the kolkhoz lent gaiety to the wedding. Naturally, that day will never be forgotten by more people than just the newlyweds themselves.

What could be said about the importance of that wedding? In the first place, there was no kalym, no mullah took part, and the union is founded on love. In the second place, an international family was formed, and this

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is yet another eloquent demonstration of the fraternal friendship existing among the peoples of our homeland. Thirdly, the Komsomol and the new, Soviet weddings are also important because they contribute to the development of a sense of togetherness, friendship and comradeship. When such a wedding is celebrated, the members of the group in which the newlyweds study or work help to make the arrangements. And this makes such a wedding attractive.

Because of the new wedding ceremonies and the formal registration of the marriage, the number of young people marrying in the religious tradition is dropping with each passing year.

It is difficult to follow the changes occurring in this area, however, due to the absence of specific sociological studies. It is all the more difficult because, unlike Russian Orthodoxy, in which the wedding takes place in a church, the mullah performs the wedding ceremony in the bridegroom's home. Furthermore, it is frequently performed secretly. There are cases in which the newlyweds have a religious ceremony and then register their marriage at a civil registrar's office.

We do have data, however, which indicate that we are seeing an increase in the number of young men refusing to marry girls they do not love, and girls rejecting marriage to men they do not love. The religious ceremony is losing its former prevalence and is frequently performed only as a formality, as a concession to relatives.

Religious elements in the old national wedding are being eliminated in the new wedding ceremonies. The Turkmen formerly delivered the bride on a camel, on a special saddle called the kedzhebe, whereas she now arrives in a passenger car. Formerly, adult girls were not permitted to travel behind a future bride, and her supporters threw stones and rotten eggs at matchmakers coming to her house. Such barbarous customs no longer exist.

At weddings of the western Turkmen the women perform the "Kusht depdi" dance. It is accompanied by songs resembling the Russian chastushki. The chastushki formerly had a religious significance, praising the men as complete rulers in the family and advocating obedience on the part of the woman. They now advocate equality and love and criticize those who cling to the old ways.

Weddings include other new elements, as well, which there is no need to enumerate. The important thing is that they are being purified of remnants of the old way of life and that new ceremonies are taking shape.

While we are on the subject, we should point out that the old Turkmen wedding ceremony was also interesting and beautiful in many ways. In the past, for example, the wedding was always accompanied by folk games and competitions (wrestling, jumping for a scarf, races, and the "keche-keche" or "yuzuk" games played in groups), and this custom is being carefully preserved, lending national color to the wedding ceremony.

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The main thing is to see that every holiday or ceremony is not only interesting and attractive, but also serious, that it have deep meaning. The new holidays, ceremonies and customs should not become simply a matter of entertainment, and when they are conducted they should contrast the scientific understanding of the world with the religious world outlook and should incorporate their meaning in clear and colorful form.

In addition to the new wedding rites, other traditions and rituals have become established in the life of the republic's rural population, which are playing a large role in the campaign against the old way of life. It is becoming the custom, for example, to hold family celebrations upon the birth of a child, whether it be a boy or a girl. This is something entirely new. Formerly, the birth of a girl was not considered a happy occasion. It was regarded as bad luck. All this has changed.

When a child is born on the "Kommunizm" Kolkhoz in Khalachskiy Rayon, for example, congratulations are immediately broadcast over the kolkhoz radio system to the parents from the kolkhoz board and its party and Komsomol organizations. The birth certificate is formally presented at the kolkhoz Happiness House, where the parents of the new baby are congratulated by kolkhoz leaders, members of the Council for the Establishment of the New Ceremonies, deputies and mother-heroines (there are several dozen on the kolkhoz). In 1977 and '78 around 200 parents were formally awarded birth certificates at the "Kommunizm" Kolkhoz Happiness House.

I would like to discuss in some detail the significance of selecting a name for the new baby. Participation by party and other public organizations in the naming of the baby is highly important in the battle against the old traditions. Many Turkmen names, you see, were connected with the names of Allah and the prophets and with religious holidays and fasts. Some names insulted the woman and underscored her inequality. This is why community participation in the naming of new babies not only pleases the parents, but also makes it possible to avoid undesirable names. Beautiful new names are now replacing such names as Khudaykuli (slave of God), Ishankuli (slave of Ishan), Gyzony (enough girls), and so forth.

We have already begun an experiment in our republic with the publication of a book in which young parents can find all the information they need on this subject.³

Festive send-offs into the army, retirement ceremonies, the celebration of anniversaries of the old kolkhoz workers and anniversaries of communist labor brigades, initiations of new kolkhoz workers, family get-togethers and other such activities have become a tradition in recent years. It would be impossible to discuss each of them in detail. We shall touch upon a few, however.

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When a kolkhoz worker has an anniversary, the entire team in which he or she works gather together. There is a sincere discussion of the individual's working career and his merits. Those present wish him good health and a happy life and present him with bouquets of flowers and tokens of remembrance, and a concert by amateur performers is arranged in his honor. This day is one of the happiest for the individual being honored.

This tradition is highly important for overcoming the religious custom ("ak goyun bermek") of celebrating an individual's 63d birthday. This is a custom exploited by the mullahs as yet another reminder of the mere mortal's dependency upon the will of Allah and of the need for obedience and humility and for faith in providence.

Some republic kolkhozes take advantage of the popularity of the so-called family get-togethers, at which the men must be accompanied by their wives. The people gather together at these functions in order to talk about what is bothering them, to discuss events in the nation and abroad and to visit with good friends. This brings them together, helps to develop a spirit of togetherness and strengthens friendship and comradeship.

People spend a large part of their free time with the family, of course, listening to the radio, watching television and so forth. In addition to these leisure-time activities, however, the individual also likes to visit with neighbors and fellow villagers, with people his own age. Their need for contact with others frequently takes people to the mosque or to "holy places." It is therefore very important to help the people establish social contacts on nonreligious ground.

These get-togethers are also of considerable importance in the campaign against remnants of the feudal-landowner attitude toward the woman. We all know that individual rural residents, sticking to the old traditions, do not visit people or go to movies or any other public places with their wives. They must and always do attend the family get-togethers with their wives, however. This gives the woman an opportunity to visit with her comrades from work when she is not on the job as well and to take part in general conversations. This is producing a certain change in the attitudes and behavior of the men. After such family get-togethers they are no longer inhibited from taking their wives to meetings, weddings, the movies, and so forth. And so, it is gradually becoming the custom for the husband to spend his leisure time with his wife, which is changing the common attitude of the husband toward his wife and the attitude toward the woman in general.

Family get-togethers are frequently held at the "Mir," "Sotsializm" and "Sovet Turkmenistana" in Ashkhabadskiy Rayon and in Takhta-Bazarskiy, Kerkinskiy, Sayatskiy and other republic rayons.

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All of this is helping to develop a spirit of togetherness. Communist moral standards are becoming the standards for the daily life of our people and intrinsic motivating force behind their behavior.

Not only have the positive folk and national traditions not disappeared in Soviet Turkmenia: On the contrary, they have flourished, now on a new, socialist basis.

Such traditions of the Turkmen people as hospitality, respect for elders and others have now outgrown their old bounds. Hospitality is no longer limited to the family circle, but has become a tradition of the republic's brigades, kolkhozes and rayons. Cherished guests are given a joyous reception, experiences are shared with them, accomplishments and skills are demonstrated for them, and so forth.

Furthermore, because of the increased contact between the peoples of our boundless nation, the Turkmen traditions of hospitality, their manner of receiving guests and the way in which they feed and entertain their guests are becoming more and more diverse and interesting. Kolkhoz workers, fellow brigade workers, the students in a group and fellow employees at an establishment celebrate joyous occasions in the lives of their comrades together, regardless of their national origin.

Hospitality is a positive tradition of all peoples. It is one of man's common moral standards and is not the result of any special quality or "national spirit" of this or that people.

Since ancient times the Turkmen have given the place of honor in their huts to a guest. They butchered a ram or a goat in honor of the guest. Many travelers and students of the culture and life-style of the Central Asian peoples have written about the hospitality of the Turkmen. Hungarian ethnographer Armin Vambery wrote: "I shall never forget that touching scene, when Allanazar (the owner of the hut in which A. Vambery was a guest--N.B.), despite our protests, killed his only goat to feed us. The next day he produced bread from somewhere for dinner, although there had been no bread in his house for several weeks. When we started on the meat, he and his old wife sat across from us and shed tears of real joy."⁴

It was an unwritten law for everyone that guests were to be received with open heart and given food. This was apparently dictated by the specific, harsh conditions of Turkmen life, a people who lived a semi-nomadic life in the desert.

Today, while maintaining the tradition of hospitality, we must combat certain ignominious aspects of that tradition. We refer to those cases in which the directors of farms take advantage of their position to play upon the sense of hospitality and squander public property.

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The Turkmen people have many good traditions having to do with the rearing of daughters. It would be incorrect to think that prior to the October Socialist Revolution no concern whatsoever was shown for the woman in Turkmenia, that everyone alike treated her poorly. Parental love, concern for the daughter's future, bringing up girls to be polite and modest, teaching them embroidery and rug-weaving, and so forth, are traditional.

While the exploitative classes did everything possible to maintain and encourage the feudal-landowner treatment of the woman, the people, the working masses, did not always follow this practice, by far. In the working families, where every pair of hands was very valuable, a concern and tender attitude developed toward the woman-and-mother and toward daughters. In the past the classic Turkmen writers, not surprisingly, produced such outstanding literary works as "Shakhsemen and Garip," "Zokhre and Takhir" and others, which celebrated the finest qualities of women.

Even when the workers did regard the birth of a girl as a family misfortune, this was due to a certain degree to great concern for their future and their honor. The rich ruled over the families of the poor, cohabitated with their daughters and wives or took them as "wives" as payment for debts and so forth. In the words of A. Vambery, the Bukhara emir Nasrulla "humiliated his subjects outrageously. Few families escaped his criminal intrusions, but, despite this, everyone was afraid to utter even the slightest criticism aloud."⁵

The good traditions include the "tam toy," or housewarming. The Turkmen have always joyfully celebrated this important event in the life of a family. There was "goresh" wrestling and bakhshi (folksingers) sang at a toy. It can be assumed that the origin of the Turkmen national contest, the "yaglyga tovsamak" (leaping for a scarf), is also rooted in the housewarming celebration. On that day the owners of the new hut hung multi-colored scarves beneath the dome, and the guests matched their skill and strength in attempts to leap high enough to grab them. These contests also became popular at other festivities.

It is already becoming a tradition for people moving into new housing to furnish their home in the best and most attractive manner possible. The kolkhoz boards allocate funds to be loaned to artel members for building houses and acquiring household items--sets of furniture, radios, television sets and so forth.

This practice was initiated several years ago by the "Sovet Turkmenistana" Kolkhoz in Ashkhabadskiy Rayon. On that kolkhoz people who want to build homes are loaned up to 3,000 rubles to be repaid under a long-term installment plan. The kolkhoz worker orders furniture from the city. He does not pay for delivery.

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These gratifying changes are having a good effect upon the lives and dispositions of the people, upon their mental and emotional state and awareness.

The custom of "yevar" has changed greatly. Formerly, the entire clan helped its members gather the harvest. "Yevars" were also assembled for building a house, performing a wedding, weaving rugs, making felt mats, and so forth.

This custom has existed in Central Asia since ancient times. Roads were built, irrigation ditches and wells were dug, and large construction projects were built collectively. What was built through joint effort was officially considered common property, but naturally, the rich had priority in their use. How could this be? After all, the water from the same canal irrigated both the landowner's land and that of the da'ikhan, and both the rich and the poor traveled on the same road. In the first place, however, the landowner's land was located along the upper reaches of a canal, and in the second place, the landowners had a great deal of land, while the da'ikhan received only the meager leavings.

And so, this basically good custom was exploited by the feudal lords and landowners for their own purposes. Disguised exploitation also existed within the clans, because they also included rich men, poor men and hired laborers. The rich men did not have bend their backs in the fields of the poor during a harvest "yevar," for example, because the latter farmed only insignificant plots.

The "yevar" has new meaning today. On many kolkhozes of Kara-Kalinskiy, Bayram-Aliyskiy and Kunya-Urgencheskiy rayons the kolkhoz workers build their houses with the help of a "yevar."

The importance of the "yevar" lies not only in the fact that it makes it possible to build things rapidly and inexpensively (the members of the "yevar" work without pay); it also develops in the rural residents a spirit of friendship and collective endeavor and makes them proud of their system.

Holidays honoring the work of rural residents have become more and more widespread in recent years. We have already mentioned a few of them. We have in mind the harvest festival, the day of the shepherd or livestock raiser and initiations of new kolkhoz workers, which have become a good tradition in the republic. The "kharman toy," or harvest festival, was held even before the October Socialist Revolution. The people were happy to see the end of the heavy, exhausting work performed under the blazing sun. It is now completely different from what it was in the past, however.

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Many poor people, who gathered the harvest from the fields of the land-owners, mullahs, ishans and akhuns by hand and gave the greater part of their crops to the feudal lords as payment for various debts and to the clergy in the name of Allah, did not actually celebrate the "kharman toyy." He ordinarily observed it within the family or a narrow circle of friends.

This holiday has now been extended beyond the family and become a mass activity, with all the kolkhoz or sovkhoz members taking part. The present day harvest festival reflects the happy life of the Soviet people and their free, selfless and creative labor. On the day of the festival the results of the year's farming are summed up, new goals are laid out, the performance of the outstanding field workers is acknowledged, sports events are held and amateur performers perform. It is colorful and emotional and is enriched with elements taken from similar festivals held in the other fraternal republics. Naturally, however, the holiday ceremonies also retain the national customs such as the singers' competition, races, wrestling, jumping for the scarf, the ram fight, and so forth.

"Shepherd's day" is also becoming a tradition. It is held in the rayon centers and on individual kolkhozes, as well as at the shepherd camps. The importance of this celebration is indisputable, because prior to the revolution shepherds in Turkmenia were only poor people and no one worried about them. They could not even conceive of any sort of festivities being held in honor of their work.

The initiation celebration for new kolkhoz workers is the youngest. The festival held on the "Sovet Turkmenistana" Kolkhoz in Gyaurskiy Rayon, for example, is very interesting. The youth graduating from school there are formally honored by labor veterans and prominent people, who talk with pride about their work, about the bountiful land and about the importance of careers in agriculture.

This holiday develops respect for work and love for the land.

Festivals like these show how highly work is valued in our society and illustrates the honor which surrounds the workingman.

FOOTNOTES

1. "V. I. Lenin O literature i iskusstve" [V. I. Lenin On Literature and Art], Moscow, 1960, p 660.
2. "Partiynaya organizatsiya i ateiticheskoye vospitaniye" [The Party Organization and Atheistic Indoctrination], Moscow, 1975, p 173.

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3. Sh. Annaklychev, "The Selection of Names Among the Turkmen," Ashkhabad, 1969.
4. Armin Vambery, "Travels in Central Asia," Moscow, 1874, p 5.
5. Ibid., pp 163-164.

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THE ROLE OF PARTY AND PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW RITES

We have described how the introduction of new ceremonies, holidays and customs into the lives of the rural workers is helping to eliminate the old, antiquated way and to develop a new life style. And naturally, this is undermining the foundation of a religion closely linked with just that, the people's life style, and manifested in obsolete ceremonies, traditions and rites. Marxism has never related the elimination of religious ceremonies to the simple exposure of such rites, however. They can only be overcome by creating new ceremonies to counter religion, by creating new and joyful holidays and ceremonies celebrating man and his creative work.

Party and soviet organs and Komsomol, trade union and creative organizations should take the initiative in creating and introducing new, non-religious holidays and ceremonies, which enrich the spiritual life of the Soviet people, and in fostering everything coming out of the creativity of the masses and warranting interest.

The formal ceremonies performed on our general holidays, the custom of collectively honoring the working people and celebrating memorable occasions in a person's life, Komsomol-youth weddings, the family get-togethers, and many other new traditions, which are playing a large role in the campaign against the survivals of Islam, were established at the initiative of public organizations.

Republic party organizations are doing a great deal to develop and enrich the new traditions and customs as they are employed in the campaign against survivals of the religious life style. On many kolkhozes of Bayram-Aliyskiy, Murgabskiy, Chardzhouskiy, Deynauskiy and Takhtinskiy rayons the primary party organizations attach great importance to the new socialist ceremonies in their discussions on how to improve the lives of the kolkhoz workers at general meetings of the communists and at sessions of the bureaus and party committees.

Kolkhoz, sovkhoz, rayon, city and oblast councils for the establishment of new ceremonies (they came into being in the early 1960's) have been created and are functioning in the republic.

On 24 December 1976 the Turkmenistan Communist Party Central Committee passed a special decree "On Further Improving the Process of Establishing the New Civil Ceremonies and Traditions in the Republic," which defined the tasks of party, soviet and other public organizations in this area. The decree also created the republic Council for the Study and Introduction of New Civil Ceremonies and Traditions. The council is headed by a deputy chairman of the republic Council of Ministers.

The council has heard reports on the work of the section for sociological studies in the field of traditions and ceremonies, the section for printed

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and oral propaganda of the Nebit-Dag registrar's office, the Maryyskaya Oblast council and the State Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting under the Council of Ministers. The constant flow of information on the work being performed in the republic to introduce and publicize civil ceremonies makes it possible to coordinate the work of various organizations in this area.

In April 1978 the section for printed and oral propaganda of the new ceremonies submitted an article to the newspaper EDEBIYAT VE SUNGAT ("Literature and Art") for public discussion. It was written by section member K. Berdiyev and was published under the headline "He Who Does Not Respect the Dead Cannot Respect the Living." It discussed civil funerals and the new ceremonies and criticized the religious aspects of the old funeral rites.

The section for the establishment of family and general ceremonies is studying the positive experience of fraternal republics and of oblast, city and rayon councils, and is working out standard, new wedding rites, drawing upon scholars, writers, musicians, filmmakers, and so forth. In rayons, cities and oblasts they are headed by deputy chairmen of the rayon, city and oblast executive committees of the soviets of peoples' deputies.

The councils are responsible for working out practical matters pertaining to the development and popularization of the new traditions and to their material and technical support, and for providing methodological assistance for agencies of the registrar's office, cultural institutions and other organizations responsible for promoting the new civil ceremonies.

The councils include leaders of many ministries and departments, scientists, literary figures and artists, representatives of the working class and the peasantry, creative unions and party, trade union and Komsomol workers.

Party obkoms, gorkoms and raykoms and all primary party organizations have been instructed to define their specific tasks and methods in the public campaign to wipe out the harmful traditions and to achieve the universal adoption of the new, socialist ceremonies, systematically to monitor and report the opinion of the workers and of various groups of the population on traditions in effect and those being established, to be more forceful in posing these questions for the appropriate agencies, and to promote the Soviet way of life.

Many party committees and Komsomol and trade union organizations have worked out specific plans and action, based on the decree passed by the Turkmenistan Communist Party Central Committee, for the introduction and development of the new civil ceremonies. These plans are being successfully implemented. The Maryyskiy, Tashauzskiy and Chardzhouskiy oblast party committees have conducted 2-day seminar-meetings for the chairmen of

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councils for the establishment of the new ceremonies. This matter has also been discussed at the plenums of certain party raykoms.

A great deal of interesting work is being performed by the party organizations of Chardzhouskaya Oblast.

Questions pertaining to the establishment of the new traditions, ceremonies and customs have been discussed in the bureaus of the party obkom and of the Chardzhous city committee and the Chardzhouskiy Rayon committee. Practical scientific conferences on this problem have been held in all 11 rayons in the oblast. An oblast practical scientific conference on the subject "For Socialist Culture in Daily Life" was held in 1977, which summed the accumulated experience of party organizations in the establishment of the new ceremonies in the lives of the people and recommended procedures for new ceremonies and rituals covering the individual's entire life, from birth to burial.

The Happiness House operating in the rural soviet at Avchy in Sayatskiy Rayon has a certain amount of experience in this area. This was the first such center in the republic. The new Komsomol-youth weddings, the registration of births, silver-wedding anniversary celebrations, the honoring of outstanding production workers, and so forth, all take place there. The chairmen of public organizations and people's deputies help make the arrangements. Workers at Happiness House help young parents choose a name for the new baby. Lists of names are posted at the center, from which the parents can select those which appeal to them.

Happiness Houses are now operating on many oblast kolkhozes, and in Sayatskiy and Kalachskiy oblasts all of the kolkhozes have them. The experience of the Chardzhous citizens is being spread throughout the republic, and Happiness Houses have been established in Maryyskaya, Tashauzskaya and other republic oblasts.

A monument to the grieving mother and a memorial to three of the village residents who died during the Great Patriotic War have been erected at the Kolkhoz imeni Khalturin in Chardzhouskiy Rayon. At the foot of the monument Little Octobrists of the village are accepted into the Pioneers, and Komsomol cards are presented to young girls and boys. Newlyweds come to place live flowers at the site, and the rural youth depart from there to serve in the ranks of the Soviet Army. It is there that the young generation take the oath of loyalty to the great cause for which their fellow countrymen gave their lives. All of this is highly important in the communist indoctrination of the people.

During the preparations and the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Soviet people's victory over fascist Germany and the 60th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution dozens of monuments and obelisks were built in honor of those who gave their lives for the homeland. Party

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organizations attempt to use these in the patriotic and international indoctrination of the Soviet people and in the campaign against bourgeois and religious ideologies.

Special sections for scientific atheism are attached to the editorial offices of republic and oblast party newspapers and to radio and television studios. The newspaper columns "The Atheist's Platform," "The Atheist's School," "The New Traditions Into Our Lives," "The Rural Intelligentsia and the Caliber of Life," "The Hated Kalym," "Fight the Relics of the Old Way" and others regularly publish articles by lecturers, doctors, cultural workers and artists, and carry items which describe the experience of party and Komsomol organizations in the atheistic indoctrination of the workers and reveal the reactionary nature of religion and the damage caused by religious rites and long-obsolete customs.

Experience worth studying has been accumulated at the republic party newspaper SOVET TURKMENISTANA. It initiated the creation of councils of elders in the rural area. We know that community opinion has an enormous influence upon the lives of the villagers. Unfortunately, atheistic community opinion does not yet prevail in the villages. We must therefore use all methods of atheistic work and all means of influencing the workers ideologically to create public opinion which would condemn the survivals of Islam, its traditions and customs, and would foster the new manners and morals among people. The council of elders can help us a great deal with this task. Because of this the newspaper SOVET TURKMENISTANA has systematically published reports on the meetings of elders and on their specific actions to combat religious survivals and to establish the new civil rites in the lives of the rural population, thereby contributing to the creation of such councils universally.

Many honored people of advanced age live in the villages, people who defended Soviet power during the Civil War and foreign intervention, took part in the socialization of agriculture and defended our nation in the Great Patriotic War. Many of them are communists. The councils of elders are made up of such people and have become an effective means of drawing the community into the battle against the old traditions and customs.

Councils of elders have existed in the republic since 1960. The first council was created on the "Mir" Kolkhoz in Ashkhabadskiy Rayon. It was used as a pattern for creating such councils universally at general meetings of men and women.

In Murgabskiy Rayon, for example, 108 elders are members of such councils. The rayon council of elders, which coordinates the work of the councils functioning on all 12 of the rayon kolkhozes, is headed by Nuri Khudayberdiyev, chairman of the interkolkhoz construction organization and a man respected throughout the rayon. He is not yet 60 years old, but

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everyone in the rayon, young and old alike, call him Nuri-aga. He has earned this respect with his honest work, his concern for people and his sensitivity. Under his direction, the elderly of the rayon are doing a great deal to introduce the new rites and traditions into the lives of the people.

The so-called holy place "Odzharli" is located in this rayon. There was a time when many pilgrims gathered there on holidays. Even in the early 1970's the "Odzharli" was visited by hundreds of people from throughout Maryyskaya Oblast on kurban-bayram and uraza-bayram, where group prayers were conducted under the direction of local mullahs. Then the old people of the rayon went to work on this "holy place." They decided, first of all, to put a halt to the activities of the mullahs, who were engaged in various kinds of "religious practices" around the "Odzharli." Nuri Khudayberdiyev met with each of them personally, explained the antisocial nature of their work, and, speaking for the old people of the rayon, demanded that they cease. Along with this, the council members stepped up their individual work with believers, especially among the populations of the "Kommunizm" and "Komsomol" kolkhozes located near the "holy place." They explained to the people the harm caused by pilgrimages to so-called "holy places" and showed how the "Odzharli" was becoming a source of unearned income for parasites and charlatans operating on the fringes of religion.

The work performed by the council of elders is producing good results. Pilgrimages to the "Odzharli" have now practically ceased.

A great deal of experience has been accumulated in the use of councils of elders in the battle against religious survivals and for the establishment of the new civil rites by the party organizations of Bayram-Aliyskiy, Ashkhabadskiy, Gyaurskiy, Ioltanskiy, Kerkinskiy and a number of other republic rayons.

The study, summarization and dissemination of the experience of the best councils of elders still leaves something to be desired, however. And we are attempting to do everything possible to help them influence the citizens' lives, awareness and conduct even more effectively.

Public organizations and councils for the establishment of new holidays and civil rites in the lives of the population must use the intelligentsia more actively in the campaign against everything old and obsolete. Many teachers, doctors, agronomists and cultural education workers now live in the Turkmen villages. It is obvious that if all the intelligentsia become involved in active educational work, we will be able to achieve a breakthrough in the campaign against relics of the past. Serious attention has been devoted to this matter of late.

A meeting of the intelligentsia on the Kolkhoz imeni Kirov in Takhta-Bazarskiy Rayon was held in April 1977, which adopted an appeal to all the intelligentsia of Maryyskaya Oblast. The bureau of the oblast committee of

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the Turkmenistan Communist Party approved it and recommended that oblast party raykoms and primary party organizations discuss the appeal at meetings of the rural intelligentsia. The appeal was discussed at all rural communities and received the support of all the oblast intelligentsia. Among other statements, the following was included in the appeal by intellectuals on the Kolkhoz imeni Kirov: "We will resolutely combat manifestations of survivals of the past in the awareness and the conduct of people and harmful rites and customs, work vigorously to shape atheistic public opinion, involve the rural workers extensively in the battle to overcome relics of the past in daily life, work tirelessly and with even greater persistence to establish the socialist way of life, and promote the new rites and traditions."¹

Party raykoms and obkoms have also begun using scientific-theoretical and scientific-practical conferences, effective means of increasing the rural intelligentsia's role in improving the caliber of life and combating relics of the past. These conferences are frequently held in Maryyskaya and Chardzhouskaya oblasts.

A helpful republic scientific-practical conference "On Raising the Rural Intelligentsia's Role in Achieving a Comprehensive Approach to the Communist Indoctrination of the Workers in Light of Decisions Coming Out of the 25th CPSU Congress" was organized by the Turkmenistan Communist Party Central Committee. More than 40 various reports were delivered at plenary sessions and in the sections. Representatives from a number of fraternal republics took part in the conference. The intelligentsia is making an important contribution to the development of the socialist society's culture and to the preparation of educated and aware builders of the new life.

It is the task of public organizations to prevent religious elements and survivals from the feudal-patriarchal way of life from creeping into our life-style and to combat the use of variations of these by supporters of the old life-style for their own benefit. We need to take a creative approach, imaginative and without formalism, to the development of new customs and traditions, and to combat bureaucracy within the system of ceremonies.

When the new weddings and formal ceremonies are performed in certain rayons, the touched-up but still routine "undertaking" slips out, through all the solemnity of the occasion. In some cases certain representatives of public organizations make long, official speeches, which are delivered in "officialese." This tires and bores people.

The ceremony for each holiday and festivity should be filled with good song and music, with national games and various activities which clearly reveal the basic concept behind a given festival. All of this is clear, but the practical realization of what is so obvious to everyone is far more difficult. This is precisely why accumulated experience which has produced

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good results deserves all possible support. The cultural centers of Turkmen-Kalinskiy and Bayram-Aliyskiy rayons have this sort of experience to share.

The new festivals and ceremonies, especially the weddings, sometimes involve great expense and excesses. Instead of acquiring inexpensive but comfortable furniture, attractive clothing and the modern household goods needed by the new family, enormous amounts are spent on the wedding itself. The fact of the matter is that a wedding is arranged for the young people, as a rule, and a separate one for "the others." When we add to this the celebration to which the bride's parents are invited, we have three weddings. As a result, the newlyweds find themselves in debt after a luxurious wedding.

Every new festival and ceremony must have its own specific character, its own image, its own symbolism, its own specific attributes, just as the human being has his own individual personality. The authors of some publications advocate the standardization of ceremonies throughout the Union.

We can hardly agree with this suggestion. All the festivals and ceremonies, old and new, of each people and each ethnic group have their own specific features and touches. And what is practiced by one people is not always acceptable to another. It is true that they all have a common significance and a common essence. This does not mean, however, that they can be standardized, ignoring the specific qualities in the life of this or that people.

The best, progressive traditions and ceremonies of various nationalities and ethnic groups are becoming universally Soviet and international in our nation's climate of friendship and fraternity. Such good customs and ceremonies as family celebrations of births, the election of toast-masters from among the gay and witty at weddings and other festivities did not exist among the Turkmen formerly. They have now become solidly established in the lives of the Turkmen people. This is a positive and natural development.

There should be no duplicity in the establishment of new celebrations and rites. Unfortunately, it still occurs.

The Russian people, for example, have a custom whereby the wedding guests yell "gor'ko" (bitter) and the newlyweds kiss. In some cases in Turkmenia the organizers of the new weddings have attempted to copy this custom. To kiss a girl in public, even one's wife, was considered awkward and indecent among the Eastern peoples, including the Turkmen, because a kiss is a "secret between two people in love." Because of this the attempt to introduce this custom into the life of the rural youth did not meet with

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success. On the contrary, it had a certain negative effect. As a Komsomol worker the author encountered young people who rejected the recommendation of Komsomol-youth weddings, only because they required kissing in front of parents, older relatives and "outsiders"....

This might sound trivial, but ceremonies are made of just such trivialities, after all. Does this not tell us that we cannot afford to ignore such things?

We have mentioned the fact that ceremonies, customs and rites are used by the mullahs and ishans to bolster Islam's position in the lives of the people and to develop religious feelings in them. The clergy devotes considerable attention to rites connected with burials and memorial services for the dead.

Moslem funeral rites are extremely complicated and actually do make a powerful impression upon people shaken by the death of one near to them. Numerous rules and instructions in the shari'a explain how to prepare for the death of a close relative, how to wash and clothe the body, how to carry it to the cemetery and place it into the grave, how bury a man and a woman, an adult and a baby, and so forth. And every detail, even the smallest item, has its own significance and its own interpretation.

In most cases the dead are still buried according to religious custom. In some cases, pressure is exerted by relative and nonbelievers--doctors, teachers, agronomists--are buried with religious rites.

Other religious customs still persist fairly strongly in our lives. Memorial feasts are still held on the third, seventh and fourth days after the funeral, at which mullahs read scriptures from the Koran. The first anniversary of an individual's death is also observed, with a large number of people invited. All of this is contributing to the retention of religious survivals in our life. Last but not least, we should also bear in mind the financial burden to relatives of the deceased. They invite a mullah, who receives both money and payment in-kind for his part in the funeral rites and ceremonies.

The emotions of people need an outlet. The religious rites and customs linked to funerals and with remembrance of the deceased will not be eliminated from our lives until we counter them with new customs, carefully developed, purified of mysticism and capable of producing a powerful emotional impact upon people.

The new way is moving more and more forcefully into this area as well, although the nonreligious mourning ceremony has still not developed completely. The mourners' meeting, the farewell speeches by comrades from work, close friends and relatives, the sorrowful music, the choral singing and the placing of wreaths all create in the people an emotional state in

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keeping with the sad occasion. And people certainly do not need words of religious comfort at times like this, when they are affected more powerfully by the simple and sincere words of those whose hearts are saddened by the irreplaceable loss.

Several years ago two Heroes of Socialist Labor died. They were Kurbandury Atamuradov of the "Krasnyy Oktyabr'" Kolkhoz in Turkmen-Kalinskiy Rayon, Maryyskaya Oblast, and Yusup Kurbanov of the Kolkhoz imeni Kalinin in Kirovskiy Rayon, Ashkhabadskaya Oblast. The committees formed to arrange their funerals were able to talk the relatives out of performing religious rites for them.

In both cases a civil funeral service was held at the Palace of Culture, where the casket with the body of the deceased was displayed. The honor guard included Pioneers, schoolchildren, comrades from work and fellow villagers. Arrangements were made for people to gather at their graves in a farewell act, and the living paid tribute to the departed.

It should be pointed out that graveside farewell speeches began to be made in Turkmenia in the middle of the 1960's at the initiative of the councils of elders. The Turkmen had not previously practiced this custom. There is a tradition, however, whereby after the funeral one of those in charge of arrangements turns to those gathered and asks: "What sort of person was the deceased"? And the participants in the funeral answer in chorus: "The deceased (and they name the individual) was a good person." In 1967, during the farewell to singer Berdy Ovezmuradov, Kuli Annamuradov, chairman of the council of elders on the "Taza-el" Kolkhoz, took advantage of the moment to say a few words about his deceased friend.

"My dear fellow villagers," Kuli-aga said, "you are right when you say that he was a remarkable individual and singer. We were greatly affected by his singing and received great pleasure from it. Berdy was a simple man and an excellent comrade. Sleep peacefully, my dear friend. Your fellow villagers, to whom you dedicated your very finest songs, will not forget you."

No one condemned the council chairman for his speech at Berdy's grave. It did require a certain courage on his part (after all, he was violating a long-established custom), however, and the ability to relate his graveside speech, something to which those present were not accustomed, with the general mood of the funeral ceremony among the Turkmen.

Thereafter, farewell speeches began to be made at funerals at the initiative of the kolkhoz council of elders. This new practice came to be followed at other kolkhozes in Bayram-Aliyskiy Rayon and subsequently spread throughout the oblast. Such gatherings for mourning are gradually becoming a tradition.

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Since ancient times the Turkmen have practiced the custom of distributing money and gifts at the graveside. The mullahs preach that this is an offering to Allah, that it will help the deceased to gain favor with the All-Highest in the other world. The people in many of the republic's villages have rejected this custom due to the efforts of members of the councils of elders.

And so, new rituals are gradually becoming established in the funeral ceremony, and the old ones are disappearing.

We have briefly told about the work being conducted in the republic to create and establish in the lives of the people new holidays, customs and rites, and have demonstrated how difficult and complicated it is to accomplish this task. Customs are very tenacious, and it is sometimes very difficult to overcome them. Experience has shown us, however, that when we set about the job with spirit and with an understanding of the great importance of efforts to overcome the old traditions and to establish new ones in our lives, traditions reflecting today's social relationships, then our lives are enriched by traditions filled with profound meaning and serving the interests of the society and those of the Soviet people. And we should spare neither effort nor time to accomplish this job.

The establishment of new holidays, customs, rites and ceremonies is a matter which demands careful and subtle attention and a joint effort on the part of historians and ethnographers, philosophers and psychologists, teachers and atheists, on the part of the entire community. The tone is set by the party and Komsomol organizations, which are closest to the people and are very familiar with their interests and aspirations.

The new ways can become firmly entrenched and become a part of the modern way of life only if they touch sensitive cords in the human heart, if they are colorful, emotional and attractive and if they have profound social and psychological meaning.

FOOTNOTES

1. MARYYSKAYA PRAVDA, 12 April 1977.

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CONCLUSION

In our opinion, the establishment of the new customs is a sort of social experiment. Those customs and traditions which satisfy the contemporary spiritual and aesthetic needs of the people take hold and become a part of the individual's life, while those which are not viable and do not affect the feelings of people disappear.

The new ceremonies are contributing to the development of a new way of life, helping to divert people away from the mosque and the "holy places," and freeing them from the oversight of the mullahs in the celebration of important events in the individual's life.

We are aware that far from everything involved in the process of developing the new ceremonies is turning out the way we would like. We make errors, and our plans are sometimes not fully realized. The organizational side of this work leaves something to be desired. It is frequently an altogether amateur undertaking. And a real celebration, as A. V. Lunacharskiy wrote, "must be organized, like everything else in the world, which tends to make a highly aesthetic impression."¹

We are also aware, however, that we must not go to the other extreme, that of restricting initiative in the masses and of interfering in the lives of people by administrative means, which would contribute to the injection of elements of formalism into the new ceremonies.

The republic party organization, guided by instructions coming out of the 25th party congress on taking a comprehensive approach to the communist indoctrination of the Soviet people and by decrees passed by the CPSU Central Committee on ideological work, specifically the decree passed by the CPSU Central Committee "On Further Improving Ideological and Political and Indoctrinational Work," is attempting to improve the ideological and theoretical quality and effectiveness at all levels and in all areas of ideological work. Throughout this work great importance is being attached to the establishment of the new ceremonies in our lives.

FOOTNOTES

1. A. V. Lunacharskiy, "Pochemu nel'zya verit' v boga" [Why One must Not Believe in God], Moscow, 1965, p 360.

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